

The New Books Biography

(Continued from preceding page)

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SAINT FRANCIS. By Seymour Van Santvoord. Dutton. \$1.50.

PETER, PRINCE OF APOSTLES. By F. J. Foakes-Jackson. Doran. \$2.50 net.

THE PORTRAIT OF ZELIDE. By Geoffrey Scott. Scribners. \$2.

JULIUS CAESAR AND THE GRANDEUR THAT WAS ROME. By Victor Thaddeus. Brentanos. \$5. UP FROM THE CITY STREETS. By Norman Hapgood and Henry Moskowitz. Harcourt, Brace. \$2.50.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN. Edited by Emanuel Hertz. Bloch. \$5.

GILBERT, SULLIVAN AND D'OYLEY CARTE. By François Collier and Cunningham Bridgman. Pitman. \$6.

STATESMAN AND FRIEND: Correspondence of John Adams with Benjamin Waterhouse. Edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford. Little, Brown. \$3 net.

SULLA THE FORTUNATE. By G. P. Baker. Dodd, Mead. \$5.

THE TRAGIC BRIDE. By V. Poliakov. Appleton. \$3.

REMINISCENCES OF PRESENT-DAY SAINTS. By Francis Greenwood Peabody. Houghton Mifflin. \$5.

THE CONFESSIONS OF ST. AUGUSTINE. Translated and annotated by J. G. Pilkington. Boni & Liveright.

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Fiction

THE ARRESTED MOMENT. By CHARLES CALDWELL DOBIE. John Day. 1927. \$2.50.

Mr. Dobie is the author of a novel published last season and a successful contributor of short stories to all the most popular American magazines. Twelve of his best pieces, ranging from the theatric title story to the gently playful "Wild Geese," have been collected in this volume. They are precisely what might be expected from such a source,—effective but not particularly distinguished tales with considerable popular appeal. Many of them are set in California or the western desert country, to which Mr. Dobie is obviously sympathetic, and of which he writes well. The chief qualities of his work appear to lie in the clarity of his narrative style, his picturesque feeling for color in description, and his keen melodramatic sense of climax. His favorite theme is sacrifice, and the sacrifice is generally of a monetary character. Practically all of his stories contain at least one character who trembles on the verge of being a villain, only to obey that impulse towards the good in the end. Within a limited field Mr. Dobie makes his points surely and unerringly.

THE PAUL STREET BOYS. By FERENC MOLNAR. Macy-Masius. 1927. \$2.

In America Ferenc Molnar has been known for some time as the author of many successful sophisticated comedies and one really moving play, but his novels and stories have received little attention. Yet in the earlier part of his career he spent much time and labor in this field, and his reputation in Hungary is the higher for it. "The Paul Street Boys" belongs to this

period, in which a naive emotionalism appears to have been his forte. It is the story of a gang of street children in Buda-Pesth, engaged in a deadly warfare with a rival band,—a warfare which turns out to be truly deadly when one of the boys, little Nemecsek, dies as the result of injuries received in the fighting. Much is made of the pathos of his case, his poor but honest parents, the visits of his comrades during the rather long drawn out death scene, and so forth. Though Molnar is here as successful at rousing the facile emotions as in "Liliom," the first chapters of the book are better done. His humor is, indeed, far above the sentimentalized stuff with which he pads out the tale. There is never anything approaching the high imaginative quality with which he invested much of "Liliom," but there is much that is pleasant and readable in his drama of the Buda-Pesth sidewalks. His children are warranted to appeal, and to be recognizable types in spite of their exotic background. It is not an important affair, but it will reveal to the curious what the cynical author of "The Guardsman" thinks about in his less worldly moments.

IDEALS. By EVELYN SCOTT. A. & C. Boni. 1927. \$2.

There are five long character sketches in Mrs. Scott's new book, not one of which contains more than a single focussed narrative incident. She has attempted to suspend her five subjects in the midst of life rather than to animate them. Though she is lavish with details and background, she makes no attempt to tell a story in the conventional manner, preferring to leave the dramatic implications of each character for the reader to follow. She has been most successful with the women. Queenie Abrams, the buyer, and Mother Immaculate Heart, the youngest mother superior of her sisterhood, are truly lifelike portraits—and, better, they stand as significant types of the feminine mind. Her satiric undertone is perhaps her greatest asset. But, as in her recent novel "Migrations," Mrs. Scott is curiously lacking in finished craftsmanship. Though she has created her people out of real stuff, and studied them thoroughly, there are sudden inexplicable lapses from taste, thick writing, dullness to a degree often imperilling the entire conception. Mrs. Scott seems to be in Mr. Dreiser's case. She has been given sufficient vision and the energy to pass it on to us, but she has been denied the perfected means. Perhaps, as in Mr. Dreiser's work, this circumstance will prove of secondary importance.

A CITIZEN OF NOWHERE. By Edith Ballinger Price. Greenberg. \$2.

THE MIDNIGHT KING. By George Delamare. Henkle. \$2.

BLACK SHEEP'S GOLD. By Beatrice Grimshaw. Holt. \$2.

THE PIONEER. By J. Fenimore Cooper. Macrae Smith.

LIMELIGHT. By Howard Hockey. Macrae Smith.

COUGARS AND COWBOYS. By David M. Newell. Century. \$2.

THE MELODY OF DEATH. By Edgar Wallace. Dial. \$2.

THE BULLFIGHTERS. By Henry de Montherlant. Dial. \$2.50.

THE ORDEAL OF RICHARD FEVEREL. By George Meredith. (Modern Library). 95 cents net.

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE. By Romain Rolland. Holt. \$5.

ENDS OF THINGS. By Mary Dixon Thayer. Dutton. \$2.

CITY OF BREAD. By Alexander Nemeroff. Doran. \$2.50.

THE BARKER. By Kenyon Nicholson. Doran. \$2 net.

VESTAL FIRE. By Compton Mackenzie. Doran. \$2.

THE PLACE CALLED DAGON. By Herbert S. Gorman. Doran. \$2.50.

THREE STORIES. By Mrs. Wilfrid Jackson. Brentanos. \$4.

CORUNNA ROAD. By G. Wyndham Haslett. Brentanos. \$2.50.

Juvenile

The Children's Bookshop will run next week

TRAIL BLAZERS OF THE SKY. By JOHN PRENTICE LANGLEY. Barse & Hopkins. 1927.

This is an attempt to create a novel on the background of recent accomplishments in aeronautics. It is the first of a series of fantastic tales differing from the "Rover Boys," or Tom Swift's exploits, only in that the author has confined himself to experiences more nearly plausible. In the use of the inevitable blackguard who attempts to wreck plans, the mysterious benefactor, the dauntless and versatile hero, and of unsurpassable invention, all encumbered

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with cant phraseology, it is true to type. For the boy over ten years whose literary perspicuity has not been directed beyond this stage, it is satisfactory. The author's apparent knowledge of flying somewhat redeems it. But the appeal of action is the one literary device successfully used. It contains almost nothing in plot, character, style, or description.

SUPPOSE WE DO SOMETHING ELSE.

By IMOGEN CLARK. Crowell. 1927. \$2.

The mere idea of digging in a book for games to play may seem to destroy all sense of spontaneous fun, especially when so often the suggestions unearthed prove to be rather foolish or barren of real amusement. But it can be guaranteed that this particular collection is for the most part well chosen and really worth while, as well as unusually wide in its range. This means not only the range of age-interests—from children's amusements to pencil-games, puzzles, and letter-games that will tax adult ingenuity—but also a great variety of types. And there is a full and clear index which will save time in making plans. A section on riddles and on simple tricks and home-made puzzles should be specially mentioned, for it will start any aggressive small boy on a delighted career of conquest.

DIMPLE DIGGERS. By ROBIN CHRISTOPHER. New York: Elm House. 1927. \$2.

Here are thirty child-poems by one who in the choice of a pen-name has rather traded on the success of A. A. Milne. But "Robin Christopher's" verse has its own merits, and his small book will prove pleasing to parents, with its illustrations by Gerta Ries. Most of these verses have appeared from time to time in *The Conning Tower*, conducted by "F. P. A." in the *New York World*. The actual author, whom we happen to have met, is a most unassuming gentleman with a decided sense of humor. We wish his book well because it has a personality of its own and a light and charming touch.

DRAKE'S QUEST. By Cameron Rogers. Doubleday, Page. \$2.50.

TRAIL BLAZERS OF THE SKIES. By John Prentice Langley. Barse & Hopkins.

JOY AND PAIN. By Dorothy Whitehill. Barse & Hopkins.

JUST ONE MORE. By Natalie Johnson Van Fleet. Doubleday, Page. \$2.50 net.

THE JINK SHIP. By Howard Pease. Doubleday, Page. \$2 net.

THE CHILDREN'S PUNCH. Edited by M. T. Bryan. Scribners. \$2.50.

FEODORA. By Eleanore M. Jewett. Barse & Hopkins.

HAT MAY. By Lucy Thurston Abbott. Barse & Hopkins.

THE TWO LITTLE FELLOWS. By Josephine Lawrence. Barse & Hopkins.

THE MERRY MEN OF ROBIN HOOD PATROL. By Charles H. Lerrigo. Barse & Hopkins.

IN THE RANKS OF OLD HICKORY. By Edwin L. Sabin. Lippincott. \$1.75.

THE BOYS' BOOK OF AIRMEN. By Irving Crump. Dodd, Mead. \$2.

THE CARTER CHILDREN IN FRANCE. By Constance Johnson. Dodd, Mead. \$2.

JANNY. By Jane Abbott. Lippincott. \$1.75.

NOLLCHUCKY JACK. By John T. Paris. Lippincott. \$2.

A CAT BOOK. By E. V. Lucas. Harpers. \$1.50.

LITTLE SISTER. By Margaret Kyle. Harpers.

A DAY WITH BETTY ANNE. By Dorothy W. Baruch. Harpers. \$1.50.

LITTLE LUCY'S WONDERFUL GLOBE. By Charlotte M. Yonge. Harpers. \$1.

THE PRINCESS WITH THE PEA-GREEN NOSE. By E. H. Knatchbull-Hugessen. Harpers. \$1.

SAHARA ISLANDS. By Warren Hastings Miller. Harpers. \$1.75.

Miscellaneous

BRITISH WAR FINANCE. By Henry F. Grady. Columbia University Press. \$5.

THE CONGRESSIONAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE. By Ada C. McCown. Columbia University Press. \$4.50.

LEGISLATIVE FUNCTIONS OF NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITIES. By John Preston Comer. Columbia University Press. \$4.

Brief Mention

THIS week our shelf is a shelf of poetry. There is a contention that volumes of poetry should never be reviewed in a group. But if every book of poetry that is published were to be given a separate review by itself, the *Saturday Review*, at least, would have to publish a thirty-page number every week. A great deal of poetry comes into our office which truly merits only brevity. And that does not mean that the poetry is necessarily entirely devoid of distinction.

Two purely poetry publishers here present a group of their own poets. That statement must be slightly amended in the case of Mr. Harold Vinal who is now branching out into the publishing of prose. But Mr. Vinal started as a publisher purely of poetry. Mr. Henry Harrison, it would

(Continued on next page)

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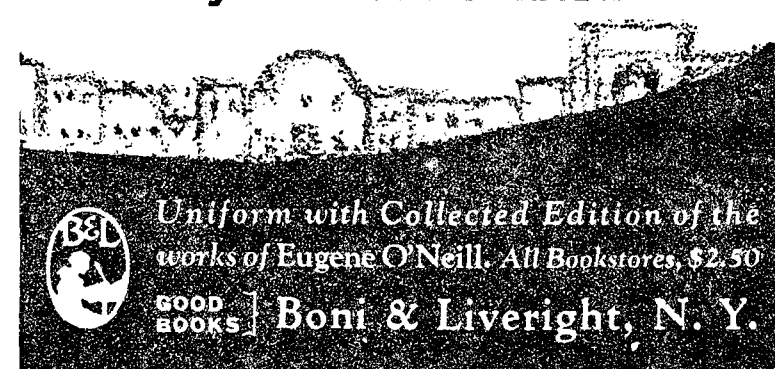
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Brief Mention

(Continued from preceding page)

Let us take up first certain recent publications from the establishment of Mr. Vinal, as his is the elder firm.

We have here four volumes to consider, two by men and two by women. To give the ladies preference, we find their verses—we must say it in honesty—undistinguished. Mrs. Henry Riggs Rathbone (*Laura Rathbone*) in "On Wings of Song" and Bessie M. Chadwick in "Under the Locust Trees" are very old-style sentimental singers of an exceedingly minor type. As for Mr. Frederick A. Wright's title poem in "The Dance at the Flying Broomstick," it is chiefly doggerel. There is a great deal for him to learn from the admirably weird and fantastic light verse of "The Ingoldsby Legends," if he desires to essay further narratives of this kind. Sometimes his titles are very good, sometimes his sonnets, as in "January in the Berkshires" and "To the Artists" have good lines and phrases. But in general his expression is mediocre merely. "Out of the Shadows," by George G. Cox is a good deal worse. It is very bad poetry, or, rather, not poetry at all. In these criticisms we take it for granted that the hearts of the poets are in the right place and that they are excellent people. But criticism's function is to apply a high standard. Its application to such lines as the following taken at random from all four books we have discussed—well, we leave it to the reader: "The blue of heaven's dome," "To take a shower-

bath 'neath moonlight beams," "It may be she watched by her children still. There were two who felt her near," "The rhythmic undulation of the sea." The last is from Mr. Wright, and, although it can hardly be called a fresh description, is the best of the four. How absolutely at random we chose these lines, by opening the books anywhere and letting our eye fall upon them, you would hardly believe. But prior to that we had read all the books thoroughly. The lines are typical of the general level of expression. We did not search for particular oddities.

With the books published by Henry Harrison we shall reverse the process. There are five of these books. We open absolutely at random. We find, "Turbits, trumpeters, fantails, what do you there?" "Here terminates his long, long trail, O splendid town," "Desire was caged within me from the start," "Though the moon shines ever so, Never marry Pierrot," "A look of hope on her distorted face." This does not seem to promise much, save the first, for we have never heard of a "turbot." A "turbot," yes, but that is a fish and this was evidently a bird. So we read "Untamed," by Benjamin Musser first. Mr. Musser cannot seem to avoid using words that jar on us like a shrieking slate-pencil in their particular context. He can also occasionally strike off this kind of thing:

*A beautiful mad hermit treads the sky,
Whence prehistoric stars look down and smile.*

But he will have the hermit treading "on wounded knees," which rather ruins the picture. Some of his ideas are good and the impulse that led him to write "Winged Stallion" is the right one, but the poem is simply as badly written as are the poems purveying "moral pap and sugar-plums" that he attacks. He should not write, "Two lovers meet and interlock: An infant the result," as he does in another poem. One cannot read it without a tendency to smile. As good an example as we can find of his fondness for what we might call "crazy-quilt writing" is the following first sonnet from "Exeunt Omnes":

*In what green forest fastness shall we find
Armored dinosaur Stegosaurus roam?
Where does Tyrannosaurus make his home?
Where Amblypoda and his Eocene kind?
When civilization grew the giants declined,
Cro-Magnon men fell even as the mome
Of progress would slay the mastodon and comb*

*An earth of wombats and their ilk aligned.
Sabre-tooth tigers went their way; the sloth
Gigantic is no more; tile-fish are gone;
Bison and buffalo will end their span
And go with loricate armadillo, both
Museum pieces be to gaze upon . . .
Somewhere in that recession walks man.*

As a humorous example of how not to write poetry this is a gem, and we shall not believe that Mr. Musser wrote it seriously. "Mome," of course, is borrowed from Lewis Carroll; but "comb an earth of wombats" is simply superb in its own right.

Carl John Bostelmann, in "Hedges, Hills and Horizons," has a bad trick of beginning a poem to ships by ejaculating "Ships" and going on from there, by beginning a poem on horizons as follows:

*Shores of all seas are horizons,
Beautiful blue of horizons,
Abyssal blue of horizons,
Horizons.*

and going on from there—to the extent of over two pages with the word "horizons" occurring by actual count forty-five times!

"The Grub Street Book of Verse" does not truly come from Grub Street, save that some of its contributions first appeared in the *New York Herald-Tribune*, the *New York Telegram*, the *New York Evening Post*, the *New York Evening World*, the *Springfield Republican*, etc. But others first saw light in small magazines such as *The Greenwich Village Quill*, *Contemporary Verse*, *The Golden Quill*, *The Emory Phoenix*, etc. The chief virtue of the book is the inclusion of a number of versified epigrams, some of which are extremely neat. Henry Harrison the publisher, Morris Abel Beer, Elias Liberman, do this sort of thing deftly. And while there are no particularly striking poems in this volume, the level of versification is quite high. Mary Carolyn Davies's "Penny Show," illustrated by Herbert E. Fouts, is the work of a seasoned poet. She also is at her best in the brief and epigrammatic. She has charm and adequate technique. There is no obstreperous beauty here, but there are some attractive little poems. Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni's "Behind the Mask" is also interesting, with some original expression, but her frequent use of free verse does not often impress her fragmentary observations upon the mind as strongly as does Miss Davies's clinched little rhyme. Miss Marinoni seems to be at her best when brief.

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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*.

N. O. K., *Fargo, North Dakota*, is greatly interested in Marie Bashkirtseff, and asks if there is an unusually good edition of her journal, and where additional facts about her life, her work, and her friends may be found. And are there other absorbing journals of women, displaying their psychology, in which this inquirer is especially interested?

THE latest edition of the famous work is "The Journal of a Young Artist: Maria Konstantinova Bashkirtseva" (Dutton), in the translation of Mary Serrano. This is as far as we have it in English, but her cult is kept alive in France by publications now and again, like the "Cahiers Intimes Inédites," edited by Pierre Borel (aux Éditions Associées, 1925), and the article in the *Revue Mondiale*, September 1, 1923, on her voyage to England. There is an article in the *English Review* by Francis Gribble, vol. 42, 1926, and a fellow-student, Mary Breakell, wrote of her in the *Nineteenth Century*, vol. 62, 1907.

The only journal by a woman that seems to me to compare with that of the Russian is "The Journal of Marie Lénér" (Macmillan). It is just as frank without such ferocious egotism: the crucifixion of body and spirit that came to one Marie through tuberculosis attacked the other on the very threshold of young womanhood with a deafness that was to become complete and incurable, but that she managed to circumvent well enough to become a successful playwright. The last woman I told about Marie Lénér's diary wrote me that she had propped it up over the sink while she washed dishes and thus glorified the task with long glances.

"Jane Welsh Carlyle: Letters to Her Family, 1839-1863" (Doubleday, Page), have much the same revelatory quality as a journal: Rheta Childe Dorr's "A Woman of Fifty" (Funk & Wagnalls), is like a diary, though it is a remembered career. Books like Evelyn Scott's "Escapade" (Boni & Liveright), and Violet Hunt's "I Have This to Say" (Boni & Liveright), hardly come under this head, but I think this inquirer should read them. And how about the "Memoirs of Catherine the Great," edited by Katharine Anthony and lately published by Knopf? There's an outspoken old party for you.

I HAVE not tried to keep track of fashions in brain-twisters; a crossword puzzle (especially without pattern) still can soothe me. But the charade seems now to be popular, and Carolyn Wells has some pretty ones in "A Book of Charades" (Doran), of which I choose this because it fits the space, though some of the longer ones are snappier:

My dogs I love, my horses I adore,
They're much to me, and yet my last is more;
And though my first is less, my whole I know

Has ever been my last's unconquered foe.

Now I think it would take a bright creature to guess that this means lesson; I had to look it up at the back of the book. There are two exasperating but highly successful entertainments just coming into popularity in my neighborhood: one is "I've Got Your Number," by Doris Webster and Mary Hopkins (Century), and the other a handwriting analysis game called "Mind Your P's and Q's," by Jerome Meyer (Simon & Schuster). In the first of these you have but to reply with yes or no to each of five groups of five questions: such as "Are your mistakes your own fault?" "If a woman you dislike is wearing a becoming hat, are you willing to tell her so?" (there are different questions for men and women), or "Would you paint your house bright blue if you felt like it?" Adding the results of these gives a key-number to a page on which there is what may be a surprisingly good sketch of your character. I cheated on two of the questions and found my analysis quite off, so I went back and told the exact truth, got another key-number and received a pretty good description. Wild horses, however, would not drag from me the page upon which this appears. The method in the handwriting test is even simpler; the results just as amusing; people seem to be taking to it well. There will soon be no way in which to keep one's self to one's self save to whack from the hands of anyone seen approaching any book held open and accompanied by an expectant pencil.

M. S. H., *Charlottesville, Va.*, asks for a not too technical book on the Psychology of the Abnormal.

THE Unconscious, the fundamentals of human personality, normal and abnormal" by Morton Prince (Macmillan, 2nd Edition), is valuable to scientist or layman. "Abnormal Behavior," by Sands and Blanchard (Dodd, Mead), relates this to social problems, and the latest book to carry psychopathology into criminology is "The Psychopathic Criminal," by Karl Birnbaum (Boni & Liveright), a handbook for social workers and a study of borderland cases.

I HAVE just heard from the missionary in Nanking to whom I sent a reading-list just before the outbreak, and concerning whose fate readers of this column have been worrying:

Unzen, Japan.

Your delightfully friendly letter recommending "Orpheus and His Lute" and "The Golden Porch" (these were in response to a call for mythologies to follow those of Padraic Colum) reached me in Nanking, March 23d, the afternoon before the Southern army came in. A day later and I would have missed it. Then, by a miracle, the copies of the books were held in Shanghai and delivered to us the day before we left for our months of watchful waiting in Japan. They and the other books formed the nucleus of our new library, most of our beloved books having gone in the looting, the majority to make shoesoles for our poor neighbors.

The two books (named above) were exactly what I wanted and I have loved them as much as the children have. I know you would have enjoyed hearing my small and snubnosed John ask to be called Prometheus, and Nancy, the eight-year-old, regret her shingle that kept her from dancing like Thetis "clad only in her flowing hair." This time I am asking for something on archaeology that children would enjoy, either in story form like "Buried Cities," by Jennie Hall, (Macmillan) that I found in Shanghai, or popularly written accounts of excavations and discoveries that will bring the Past into the life of the Present. The little that I know has proved as fascinating to them as it has been to me and we all want more.

Our summer here has been made delightful by reading Mrs. Sugimoto's "Daughter of the Samurai" (Doubleday) aloud with the children. Japan has meant so much more to them through her sympathetic interpretation of Japanese life. It does something that so many of us missionaries long to do and that the world needs very much just now. I think Selma Lagerlöf's "Marbacka" (Doubleday) widens sympathy and understanding in the same way.

J. M., WAYNE, PA., tells A. S. K., who asked about editions of *Præd's* poems, that he has one published by Stokes, "revised and complete," no date. C. H. L., Potsdam, N. Y., tells me when I speak of German dictionaries to mention the "Deutsch-Englisches und Englisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch" of Newton Ivory Lucas, published in Bremen by Schönmans Verlag, 1863, in four parts, which gives *Krieg* nearly four and a half columns, including 128 derivations and compounds. He paid \$20 for a copy. This letter has been unaccountably pigeonholed for weeks, but experiences with dictionaries are always eagerly welcomed by readers of this column. C. C., *Detroit, Mich.*, looks for a poem called "New York," written by a man named Smith and appearing in a New York paper, thought to be the *Herald*, about fifteen years ago. Two people whom I asked about this were sure they had read such a poem, and would be as glad to get it back as C. C., so I make one more exception to the rule that this corner of the paper is not for hunting poems or quotations. C. F. S., *Pasadena, Cal.*, refers K. M., who wants "reliable Western fiction," to "his fellow-townsmen's"—H. H. Knibbs'—works, published by Houghton Mifflin. "Overland Red," "Sundown Slim," "The Sungazers," etc., are capital stories, full of the atmosphere of the Southwest where their scenes are laid, and where Mr. Knibbs has lived the life he depicts. As these initials stand for Charles Francis Saunders, author of "Finding the Worthwhile in the Southwest" (McBride) and other well-known works about California, this advice has special value. M. M., *Mt. Vernon, Iowa*, asks if there is a Scandinavian Society in America, and if so, what is its address?

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