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Publishers New York

BRENTANO'S

Bibliopsyching

By AMY LOVEMAN

CHRISTMAS is icumen in, to paraphrase the old ditty, and we find that one of our great emporiums is advertising psycho-gifts for the occasion. "We've gift-psyched the world and his wife for you," proclaims Wanamaker's, printing its statement with exclamation marks and cartoons, and proceeding to subdivide mankind into the intellectual, the esthetic, the leisurely, the practical, and so on and so forth as one of the characters in Christopher Morley's presentation of "Old Heidelberg" across the river on "the last seacoast of Bohemia" would say. No, we've not gone into the business of advertising either Wanamaker's or the Rialto; we're merely trying to explain our title and to make public confession of the fact that until we saw that ad decorating the back page of all the newspapers we hadn't decided just how we'd present our Christmas book list to you. But then we knew; we'd bibliopsyched the season's offerings (we're a little doubtful as to whether we're using our newly acquired terminology correctly or not, and whether it's the offerings that are to be bibliopsyched or the persons to whom they are to go—but let it stand), neatly grouping such books of different type as seemed likely to appeal to those interested in any one of them. Where to begin?

Well, with the elders, of course, those who once were comfortable Victorians and knew this world in the pleasant days when New York was a city of ugly brown fronts, when iron deer and stone dogs disported themselves self-respectingly on the lawns of suburban homes, when grandmothers tied capacious white aprons around their waists as they sat down to the family darning, and granddaughters entertained their swains in the mellow light of the parlor lamp. If you would recapture for a friend the charm of those leisurely days give him Booth Tarkington's "The World Does Move" (Doubleday, Doran), a delightful autobiographical chronicle, carrying its description of American life from Victorian days to the present, and affording Mr. Tarkington opportunity for more of that acute social analysis which is so preëminently his forte and the keenness of which he so nearly masks by the animation and fluency with which he presents it. It was a pleasant century, viewed in retrospect, that which culminated in the reign of Victoria, but it had its fads and its oddities. "The Stammering Century" (Day), Gilbert Seldes calls it in a survey of eccentricity and fanaticism in America during its course, which should interest the older generation who knew a part of its events in the making and learnt of others at first hand. Doubtless they would find old memories flaring up the more vividly were you to present them also with one of the numerous biographies of the eminent or the notorious of their day; of Jim Fisk, for instance, to whom the famous lawyer, O'Connor, once said when he consulted him as to the legality of some obviously dishonest deal he was trying to put through: "Yes, you're perfectly safe, Mr. Fisk, but you are the greatest rascal unchanged," and of whom Macmillan has just issued a colorful life by Robert H. Fuller, under the title "Jubilee Jim." With it you might send Emanie Sachs's "The Terrible Siren" (Harpers), a biography of Victoria Woodhull, with her sister first woman operator on Wall Street, advocate of the rights of women, ardent espouser of free love, and heroine of adventures savory and otherwise. Since her day women have acquired the vote, but never since it have they had the opportunity to vote for a woman for President such as her nomination for that office afforded.

Then, there's "This Side Idolatry" (Bobbs-Merrill), which you might give if only for the malicious pleasure of rousing your friends to wrath. It's a novel based on the life of Dickens by C. E. Bechhofer-Roberts, and it deals harshly with that idol of Victorian days. Personally we think reading it is likely to have an excellent effect on Dickens lovers; it's likely to drive them to Dickens in their ire and so give them a chance of reassuring themselves of his genius.

But the Victorians are beguiling us into their own leisureliness, and we must haste us on our way. To continue: There's a novel now first published some years after her death by an author whose first book became enormously popular in the last part of the nineteenth century, and one which quite possibly the older generation might like to have,—Olive Schreiner's "Undine"

(Harpers). It's an early work, with familiar elements. With it might go, merely because it, too, deals with the South African scene, Sarah Gertrude Millin's "The Coming of the Lord" (Liveright), and Bess Streeter Aldrich's "A Lantern in Her Hand" (Appleton), the latter because the daily round of a mother's existence as there depicted is probably more typical of life in the nineteenth century than of that of today.

If any of your older friends lived in California in the vivid period when the gold rush was still lending picturesqueness to the state, he will no doubt welcome the gift of Constance Rourke's "Troupers of the Gold Coast" (Harcourt, Brace), wherein is unfolded the career of Lotta Crabtree, graduate of the gold camps of the High Sierras and of the gambling saloons and variety halls of San Francisco, and later the most popular soubrette of her day. Miss Rourke has introduced into her narrative many figures of the stage and off it widely noted in their time. Perhaps, however, you may wish to send a rather less anecdotal biography to your friend. If so, try "The Tragedy of Edward VII," by W. H. Edwards (Dodd, Mead), a documented study, or, if his taste runs rather to literature than history, "William Dean Howells—Life in Letters," edited by his daughter, Mildred Howells, and published by Doubleday, Doran. Maurois's "Disraeli" (Appleton), of course, if he has not already read it, cannot fail to meet his approval, and so also might Philip Guedalla's "Bonnet and Shawl" (Putnam), a series of sketches of the wives of British statesmen, and his "Gladstone-Palmerston Correspondence" (Harpers). Finally, just by way of proving that you don't think your friend of Victorian days too old-fashioned for present-day humor, send him Robert Benchley's "20,000 Leagues under the Sea or David Copperfield" (Holt). Its title, at least, will smack of the enthusiasms of his youth.

It takes three generations from shirt-sleeves to shirtsleeves, is the saying. Well, it takes only one to make a modernist. The children of the ample Victorians are the creators and adherents of the modern in literature and art. If it's for them you are looking for presents in the bookshops you might start your purchases with some of the volumes that will interpret their age to themselves and follow those up with others that depict it through fiction and poetry. You might, for instance, for some philosophical-minded young person, who in his easy-going idiom may wonder "what all the shouting's for," select Walter Pitkin's "The Twilight of the American Mind" (Simon & Schuster), wherein he may discover if so it suits him to interpret it, that there are more brains than business opportunities for them in this sorry old world, or you might give him, who doubtless has read "Ulysses" and thought it a work of genius, "To the Pure" (Viking), by Morris L. Ernst and William Seagle, a discussion of censorship, or else bestow upon him Wyndham Lewis's "Childermass," that indeterminate narrative—either fiction or philosophical treatise as you may choose to regard it. He'll want, of course, to keep abreast of the novels of certain of the contemporary writers, so give him Aldous Huxley's "Point Counterpoint" (Doubleday, Doran), or Michael Arlen's "Lily Christine" (Doubleday, Doran), or "Strange Fugitive" (Scribners), by Morley Callaghan (an author whose work will bear watching), "Swann's Way," by Marcel Proust, which the Modern Library has just issued in its neat, inexpensive series, or "The Second American Caravan" (Macaulay), which brings together the work of experimenters and established writers. Beverley Nichols's amusing and sometimes audacious characterizations of persons of note in "The Star Spangled Manner" (Doubleday, Doran) would doubtless prove entertaining to some up-to-date friend, and Bertrand Russell's "Sceptical Essays" (Norton) stimulating. Joseph Moncure March's powerful poetical narrative, "The Set-Up" (Covici-Friede), might go with these as also could Braithwaite's "Anthology of Magazine Verse" (Vinal). Then, finally, you might top off your fiction and poetry as you began it, with books of analytical type, "Recent Gains in American Civilization," edited by Kirby Page (Harcourt, Brace), or "Whither Mankind?" (Longmans, Green), edited by Charles A. Beard. And that does for your modern friend.

Now that we are done with him, or have

done for him, we suppose we've committed a *faux pas* by labeling him "modern." As though the business men, and lawyers, and politically minded for whom we are about to "bibliopsych" (it looks queer; as we said before, we have our doubts) weren't quite as up-to-date as he, and for the matter of that the ministers, and housewives, and scholars that we've put into separate categories! O, well, let whom the shoe fits wear it.

Lawyers are a busy set; we know no others more given to night work and scant leisure for reading unless it be the journalists. So, in view of the fact that they'll probably be poring over briefs instead of indulging in literature, we've drawn up a short list for you to select gifts from for them. (Until we wrote it we wouldn't have believed it possible that from and for could come into such conjunction except through pure typographical error. We hold no brief—the legal influence has already entrapped us—for the elegance of the phrase, but we stand by its usefulness.) And we stand by our choice of a detective story for a lawyer, though crime may seem to lie too much in the field of his business to belong in that of his pleasure. Still, let him try it; we warrant it will hold him from his labors if it is Austin Freeman's "Like a Thief in the Night" (Dodd, Mead), or "The Prisoner in the Opal" (Doubleday, Doran), by A. E. W. Mason. If, on the other hand, you want to give him something as far removed as possible from a detective tale, get him Oswald Spengler's "The Decline of the West" (Knopf), which will furnish a winter's thinking if not reading, or the two volumes of the late Albert J. Beveridge's "Abraham Lincoln" (Houghton Mifflin), or Abbé Dimmet's "The Art of Thinking" (Simon & Schuster). If he is so wedded to his work that he will have naught outside its field, you have a book ready to hand that he will surely find interesting in Judge Benjamin B. Cardozo's "Paradoxes of Legal Science" (Columbia University Press).

The tired business man! Poor, maligned creature, popularly supposed to have a mind too weary to cope with anything but frivolity and insipidity! We, for one, don't believe it, and just to prove our faith we've "psyched" him ((Heavens, we're in hot water again with that word) in such wise that the list for your choice is nothing lacking in dignity. Of course, it has a detective story (everybody likes detective stories) in "The Mystery of the Blue Train" (Dodd, Mead), by Agatha Christie, and a rattling good tale of adventure in George Preedy's "General Crack" (Dodd, Mead), in reading which the aforesaid tired business man can transport himself into lusty experience and stalk the stage in fancy dress. That's all the fiction we've vouchsafed you, though there's nothing but laziness that prevents us from appending a number of other novels. The trouble is with us, not with the business man. He's just as ready as any of the rest of us to enjoy Louis Bromfield's "The Strange Case of Miss Annie Spragg" (Stokes), or "Toilers of the Hills" (Houghton Mifflin), by Vardis Fisher, a tale of Idaho, or Galsworthy's "Swan Song" (Scribners), or Glenway Westcott's "Good-bye, Wisconsin" (Harpers). Now we've done it! We've let ourselves enumerate several novels instead of two when we haven't time, or perhaps space, for them. Honest confession is good for the soul, says the proverb, so we'll confess to the fact that we are writing this list in the knowledge that the *Review* is made up except for it, and that when completed it has to fit into the columns we inveigled the printers into holding open for it. If we write too much, the ministers, or the lawyers, or perhaps even the Victorians will have to be decapitated; if we write too little, we, we are afraid, shall lose our head. Rather they than we. Hence these parentheses.

But to return to our business man, or rather your business man. We imagine he would be glad to have you bestow upon him Count Egon Cäsar Conti's "Reign of the House of Rothschild" (Cosmopolitan), and with it, of course, Marcus Eli Ravage's "Romance of the Rothschilds" (Dial), or George Oudard's "The Amazing Life of John Law" (Payson & Clarke), or, since the Spanish-American countries bid fair under the incoming President to take on increasingly important business relations with us, Ernest Gruening's "Mexico and its Heritage" (Century), J. Fred Kippy's "Mexico" (University of Chicago Press), and Arthur Ruhl's "The Central Americans" (Scribners). Paul de Kruif's "Hunger Fighters" (Harcourt, Brace) would be

(Continued on page 476)

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—ROBERT O. BALLOU in the *Chicago Daily News*.

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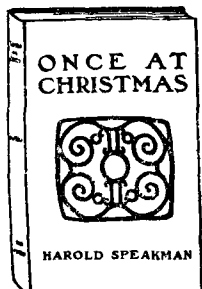


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No. 5—BRUNO FRANK

Bruno Frank was born at Stuttgart, Württemberg, in 1887. He is one of the best known of the younger German writers and has produced five volumes of poetry, four volumes of short stories, three novels and three plays. He and his charming wife, the daughter of two of Germany's most famous theatrical stars, live near Munich. Of Bruno Frank's work there has been published by Alfred A. Knopf in this country *Twelve Thousand*, an unusual play of the time of the American War for Independence, *The Days of the King*, a striking picture of Frederick the Great, and *Trenck*.

Bibliopsyching

(Continued from page 474)

likely to interest the friend whose business in any way has to do with the production and distribution of foodstuffs and who has profited from the researches which have so increased their quantity and improved their quality, while in this day of extensive advertising W. A. Dwiggins' "Layout in Advertising Layout" (Covici, Friede) ought to appeal to almost all business men. And for them, as much as for any other group, Joseph Jastrow's "Keeping Mentally Fit" (Greenberg) would seem appropriate.

The year's yield of books seems unusually rich in volumes of interest to the clergy. We don't know how daring you are, or how tolerant of sporting with Biblical episode your minister may be, but we are sure neither you need fear nor he resent such a book as Elmer Davis's "Giant-Killer" (Day), wherein is set forth with much fidelity to detail the story of David and Goliath. You might give him, too, Louis Untermeyer's "Moses" (Harcourt, Brace), with the statement that the author does not pretend to adhere to the Biblical chronicle, and, if you are not afraid of offending his reverence, Philip Littell's "This Way Out" (Coward-McCann), the cleverest and most sacrilegious of the Adam and Eve stories, or R. C. Washburn's "Samson" (Sears). However, you will in all likelihood wish to give him something in addition to a novel. If you do, you have a number of biographies from which to choose. O, but we forgot. There's a charming collection of stories which your friend of the cloth might particularly enjoy—Jay William Hudson's "Abbé Pierre's People" (Appleton), one of those rare books that manage to distill the fragrance of humble society, and to clothe simple human relationships in tenderness.

Now that our interpolation is ended we'll return to the biographies we were about to recommend to you. There are several lives of John Wesley, one by Arnold Lunn (Dial), another by Abraham Lipsky (Simon & Schuster), a study entitled "John Wesley among the Scientists" (Abingdon), by F. W. Collier, and one called "Wesley's Legacy to the World" (Cokesbury), by J. Rattenbury. Then there's Katherine Ann Porter's "The Devil and Cotton Mather" (Harcourt, Brace), which ought to interest churchmen, Charles C. Sellars's life of the itinerant preacher, Lorenzo Dow (Minton, Balch), and a trio of books that either together or individually should prove welcome, Charles W. Ferguson's "Confusion of Tongues" (Doubleday, Doran), an account of the strange religious sects of America, Grover C. Lord's "Evangelized America" (Dial), and Winfred Ernest Garrison's "Catholicism and the American Mind" (Willett, Clark & Colby).

We are not as enthusiastic about the gift-psyching idea as we were when first we saw that ad of Wanamaker's in the newspapers. It's getting us into difficulties, for we can't seem to make our categories clear cut, and we gather from Wanamaker's copywriter that the essence of the scheme is "to choose gifts that appeal to the most highly developed sense in each individual." We've been attempting to substitute taste for sense, but we've decided that's all nonsense, for there's no reason on earth except the necessity of the occasion for assuming that the doctor won't be interested in H. G. Wells's "Mr. Bletsworthy on Rampole Island" (Doubleday, Doran)—incidentally we've made a bad choice in selecting this title for the story hinges on an incident that lies directly in the path of the medical practitioner—or the lawyer in the three new volumes of the Pageant of America series just issued by the Yale University Press, or in Sidney Fay's "Origins of the War" (Macmillan). However, we're committed to bibliopsyching, so we shall continue on our dubious way.

There's that friend of yours whose interest has always been predominantly in history. Perhaps, we say it hopefully for this looks as if it were an opportunity to vindicate our bibliopsyching, this predominant interest is preeminently for Napoleon (that ought to raise the interest to the nth power). If so, give him Walter Geer's "Napoleon and His Family" (Brentano's) and Dmitri Merezhkovsky's "Napoleon the Man" (Dutton), and so that he may have fiction together with history, Ford Madox Ford's "A Little Less than Gods" (Viking). Perhaps his interest in the first Napoleon descends to the third; if so, or anyway, give him Maurice Paléologue's "The Tragic

Empress" (Harpers), a record of the intimate life of the Empress Eugénie largely based on conversation between the author and the exiled sovereign. Perhaps, too, his interest will embrace another tragically fated monarch of France, Marie-Antoinette. If it does, send him E. Barrington's well-conceived and well-written novel, "Empress of Hearts" (Dodd, Mead). Monarchs reminds us that there's a new volume by Lytton Strachey, always an event of its season, "Elizabeth and Essex" (Harcourt, Brace), which should furnish lively reading for the historically-minded friend. Then, too, you can make choice for him from among such books as Samuel McCoy's "This Man Adams" (Brentano's), John Buchan's "Montrose" (Houghton Mifflin), a history which has had its by-product in novels from the pen of Mr. Buchan, W. E. Woodward's lively "Meet General Grant" (Liveright), Harold Lamb's "Tamerlane: The World-Shaker" (that's such a grand, impressive, mouth-filling, awe-inspiring title that we can't resist putting it in in full), Cyril E. Robinson's "England" (Crowell), E. K. Rand's "Founders of the Middle Ages" (Harvard University Press), and Mary Stanard Baker's "The Story of Virginia's First Century" (Lippincott). And now, confronting us in solitary glory where it doesn't belong as much as it did under the psych, or the graph, or the psycho-graph or whatever you call the thing, for the lawyers, is Charles Warren's "The Making of the Constitution" (Little, Brown). Gentlemen, your compassion. There is a higher law than the Constitution, and that is the necessity that knows no law. We invoke it to excuse our failure to take the time to insert Mr. Warren's "The Making of the Constitution" under the category in which it belongs. No, we're not quite through with suggestions for your historically minded friend yet. We've got two plums in store for him the shape of Stephen Vincent Benét's stirring and notable "John Brown's Body" (Doubleday, Doran), one of the most important poetical works to have made their appearance in this country in recent years, and William Byrd's "A Journey to the Land of Eden" which Macy-Masius have reissued.

We can't honestly say that we think a very fine line is to be drawn between the man who is interested in the Civil War and the World War. Still, since we have embarked on these categories, we're putting the former in the group we call your historically-minded friends, and the latter in that of the international-minded. What is that quotation we are fumbling around in our mind for? Ah, we have it.

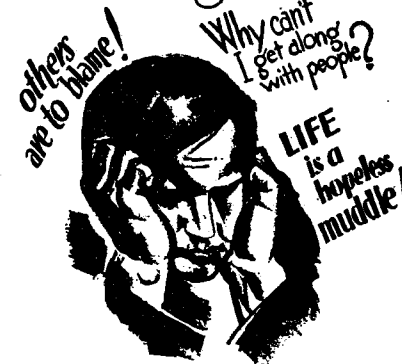
*He could distinguish and divide
A hair 'twixt south and southwest side.*

Well, that's the position we've railroaded ourselves into. (And we were always brought up to believe you should never end a sentence on a preposition. However—) Now to bibliopsych the internationally-minded.

Most certainly the student of the war and the events that led up to it should be interested in the "Memories and Reflections" of the Earl of Oxford and Asquith (Little, Brown), in the third and fourth volumes of "The Intimate Papers of Colonel House" (Houghton Mifflin), edited by Charles Seymour, which have just appeared, and in Prince Lichnowsky's "Heading for the Abyss" (Payson & Clarke). Undoubtedly, too, he will want to read "My Autobiography" (Scribners), by Mussolini, and William Martin's "Statesmen of the War" (Minton, Balch), and Lord Beaverbrook's "Politicians and the War" (Doubleday, Doran). If you wish to spice more weighty consideration of matters of international moment with the salt of fiction send him Simeon Strunsky's novel, "King Akhnaton" (Longmans, Green), in which a parallel is drawn between Woodrow Wilson and the Egyptian King, and Arnold Zweig's powerful tale of the war, "The Case of Sergeant Grischka" (Viking), a work which has just been selected by the Book-of-the-Month Club, and which has already won golden opinions in Europe. And you might add to it another volume, this time not fiction, which has been much discussed abroad, Julien Benda's "The Treason of the Intellectuals" (Morrow), a discussion in which the author undertakes to demonstrate that the intellectuals, who of all groups might most be expected to cast their

(Continued on page 489)

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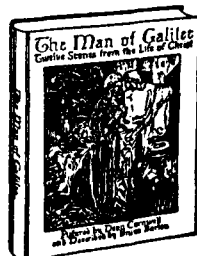
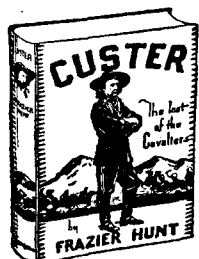
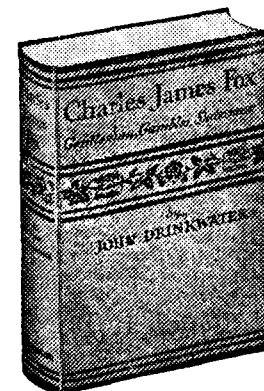
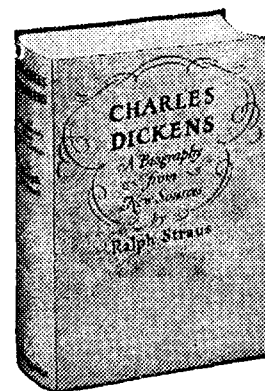
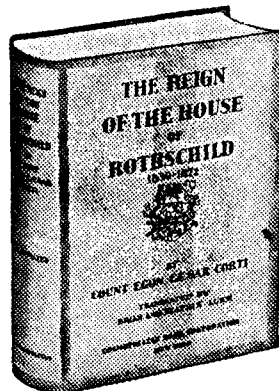
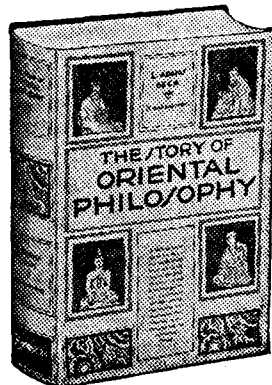
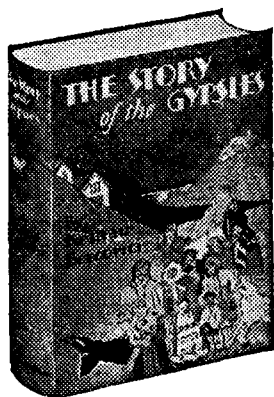
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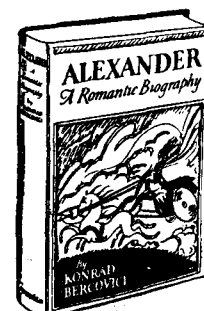
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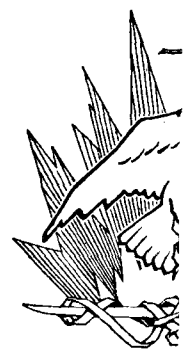
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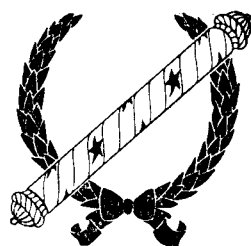
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"NO one but a blockhead, Sir, ever wrote for anything but money," said Dr. Johnson. The old bear's growl is, as it always was, tonic, and is indicated in all cases of literary failure. For there is a sort of hypochondria which afflicts unsuccessful authors, cozening them into blaming the public for their own inadequacy. Often, they call themselves too proud or too honest to give the public what it wants, and are blind to the narrow and shifting line which divides sycophancy from a decent respect for the opinions of mankind. It is one thing to pander to the public's untutored lusts, and quite another to serve its legitimate demands. The author is the cook in the intellectual restaurant, and the publisher the waiter; if they cease trying to shove each other into the soup, they may be able to popularize a new dish, but they must always be aware of the desperate efforts which their customers make to find something familiar in the most exotic concoction. It is probably difficult to sell *moules à la marinière* to anyone who does not like steamed clams.

The public, indeed, has a virgin palate. It likes the truth, I think, so long as the truth is cousin to its experience; it never did enjoy caviar. Just at present, it is gobbling sex with a certain greed, because it knows enough about sex to grasp at an understanding of even erudite terminology, and because its immediate progenitors got their sex from a bootlegger. It enjoys stories about parsons which prove that virtue is rare; it reads stories about boys because it thinks they are young devils, and about children because it knows they are little angels; it takes much sugar in its love tales because there has been sugar in its own experience of love. Follow Münsterberg's method—mention one word, and John Citizen thinks of another without effort or ratiocination; the line of connotation is the line for authors to follow if they would live on their checks. Point your finger at the poor old man in the street—who, God knows, is generally a target for more than fingers—and say to him: "Central America!" He will answer, "Revolutions!" as the Dormouse answered "Treacle!"—without thinking at all. Say "Teacher!" to him, and he, recalling the days of his youth, grows reminiscently sore behind and replies, "Tyrant!" This fact brings me to the kernel of my screed.

I am a teacher, and I do not think that I am a tyrant. I am also intimately acquainted with Central America, and know many Central Americans who are frightfully bored with revolutions. Suffering as I do from writer's itch in a chronic and exaggerated form, I have been writing stories and articles for twenty years and have sold about one a year. I bear no grudge against editors, who have always treated me with courtesy and consideration, and have often told me both pleasant and unpleasant truth about my stuff. I have, however, a vivid and natural curiosity about the reasons for so meager a return from so much more or less intelligent work. My enemies say that the answer is simple enough—that I simply cannot write—but that statement is absurd, and I refuse to consider it. I will admit, if pressed, that many of my rejections have been richly deserved, and I do wish that some of the frightful drivel with which I have cumbered the mails in my time would cease to haunt me in evil dreams. Bad work aside—and I have done enough of it to warrant my commitment to a lunatic asylum—certain vulgar errors have blocked my way to success. Customers persist in sending the waiters back with my *moules à la marinière* and asking me for steamed clams. They want their schoolteachers to be absent-minded halfwits with nasty dispositions; they want their Central Americans to be saddle-colored homicides. These are the accepted types. Originality may be the reproduction of a type with a difference, but the type reproduced should at least be a credible one.

One may say with sufficient justice that "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" fixed the type of pedagogue for all time. Ichabod Crane sits as the ghostly censor of all school stories—a task most congenial to him—and insists that, whatever schoolteachers may be in real life, in fiction they must be stupid, shabby, and ridiculous. Having no strength, they may be pathetic figures, but they can never be heroes of tragedy or victorious characters in the comedy of life. This dictatorship or caricature is opposed to the experience of most men and most women, for

few people are so often regarded with genuine affection as teachers are. Even the man whose schooldays were the most uncongenial will say pleasant things about at least one man or woman who has taught him, and, when one of his old teachers visits his city, will turn out the guard for him and exhaust hospitality to make his stay agreeable. Nevertheless, in fiction the teacher must be the butt, so that the boy who has never grown up may laugh when he slips on a banana peel or sits down on a tack. The atmosphere of a well-run school to-day is apt to be friendly, and the bar between the pupils and the teachers may be easily overleapt; in fiction it must be impassable, so that the stock situations may be developed. If the teacher's character is to be slightly humanized, he must be a futile dodderer, frustrated in every effort he has made in life.

To illustrate. I once sold a story about a schoolmaster. It was a good story, but the artist who illustrated it did me much evil. My hero was a vigorous personality with nothing vague about him. He had spent many years in his profession, and liked it—was, in fact, absorbed in it, except at those flat moments that come to all of us. I conceived him as a man of fifty-five or perhaps sixty, a fair golfer for his age, fond of the country, and clad as a rule in tweeds—a man in excellent physical shape, with a sense of humor that did not slap one on the back, but rather trickled through his life. He was, in short, such a man as most of my teaching friends are, or will be when they grow older, and I liked him. That confounded illustrator afflicted him with long gray hair, like a Shetland pony just off grass, a mustache to strain soup with, and knees that he could never have held straight in his life—oh, most weak hams. He dressed the poor devil in an antiquated frock coat with putative grease spots on the lapels, and plumped him down in the middle of a semi-formal evening when everyone else was wearing a dinner coat. The fellow domiciled him, moreover, in what seemed to be the housefurnishing department of a big store. His wife apparently allowed the general maid to serve tea and other meals in a filthy Mother Hubbard, and his breakfast table was bedizened with electrical gadgets instead of with apparatus appropriate to a man of social tradition and surface. But it was the frock coat that most exasperated me. He wore it in the evening when he was expecting guests, and in the morning when he wasn't; I think he slept in it, and if he did, he was an unquiet sleeper. I suppose I ought to be grateful to this pencil-pushing slave, as his pictorial monstrosities may have enticed conventional souls to read the tale. I am not grateful. The Lord reward him according to his works!

The story sold, perhaps because it contained the suggestion that that artist developed. My man was not living victoriously, in the cant sense of the term; he had not ridden rough-shod over all obstacles and built his life according to his own plan. He had meant when young to become a surgeon, and had allowed circumstances to force him into another channel. That was weakness, perhaps, but once in his new line of life, he had made the most of it, as the senile palterer of the illustrations could never have done. All of that was made evident in the story, but the implication remained that he had slipped into teaching instead of climbing into it; therefore, the popular idea of the profession as a harbor for derelicts was sustained. I have written other stories about teachers and have sold none of them, because, as I believe, they attempted the introduction of a new type instead of dealing with a variant of the accepted one.

In dealing with Central America, my experiences have been similar; I have sold two or three stories which happened to be near enough to the popular conception. One of them was about voodoo in Haiti, and another about an engineer not unlike Clay in "Soldiers of Fortune." The illustrators did not enrage me as much, though the vegetation of their backgrounds belonged in Rarotonga and not in Port-au-Prince or Guatemala. The characters and the situations in these were fairly conventional; one emphasized the superiority of the Nordic race, and another set forth the destructive influence of hot countries inhabited by sinister and pigmented magicians. Therefore, they sold, and one of them at least attracted considerable attention.

Now, it cannot be denied that there are

pedants in teaching and bandits in Central America. It is even possible that in years gone by no other sort of men existed in these backgrounds. Twenty years ago, when my association with the tropics began, I knew many beachcombers who had forgotten what their names were back in the States; most of them have staggered up the beach and vanished, giving place to a superior type. The soldiers of fortune, too, who were never anything but renegades, have played their hands out and ended—courageously, I must confess—with their backs against adobe walls. The change began when we took over the Canal Zone and attacked tropical diseases and tropical living conditions—a utilitarian effort which has had profound political effects, just now beginning to be evident in the changing point of view of tropical populations. When life is miserable, as it was twenty years ago for both native and foreigner, violence ensues; improve living conditions, and the advocates of violence tend to become a minority. The change in Central American conditions has been adumbrated in various articles, but, in so far as I know, has not yet been expressed in fiction, except in one fine novel of my own which no publisher in the country will accept.

A similar change has come over the spirit and personnel of schoolteaching—living conditions have been improved and violence is no longer the approved method of administration. Ever more often, one hears the perplexed layman offer to a teacher his greatest compliment—"You're the damndest schoolteacher I ever met." He means well, and sees a glimmer of the light, but he will not read stories about pedagogues made human. Yet he is genuinely and sometimes intelligently interested in education.

Here then is my dilemma. I know well two kinds of life which have in them elements of popular interest. I cannot write the accepted type of tale about either of them; believing in Dr. Johnson's dictum, I have tried to, shamelessly. I cannot sell a story which delineates a new type of teacher or Central American. Yet it seems to me important that the truth about these two aspects of life should be told, in so far as one man may tell it. A conviction that one's subject is important is, of course, a dangerous obsession for a writer of fiction, tending as it does to overload the fable with purpose, so that one's characters run the risk of becoming merely embodied vices and virtues with no blood in them. Yet a lack of conviction is equally dangerous; one must have something to say, however desirable it may be to eschew propaganda.

The whole problem seems to me to have far more than a merely personal importance. All characters and all backgrounds were once new to fiction; most of them were new at some time during the nineteenth century, for fiction then was in its adolescence. To be sure, villain and hero had appeared on the stage for some centuries previous; the motives of the drama, moreover, are the same as the motives of fiction. But the burden laid upon the novelist and the short story writer is in a way heavier than that laid on the dramatist. A man finds it easy to believe anything that he sees well acted, for at a play the critical sense is apt to be submerged. The introduction of novelty, therefore, has a better chance of success on the stage than between covers, and the drama can carry more propaganda than the novel. Consider in this connection the long life of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" as a play and its relatively short span in its original form. It is not impossible, then, that new characters and new methods of treatment must ease their way into fiction through the stage, which in turn may derive its material direct from life, however unfamiliar the sort of life selected may be to the audience. Ibsen's plays probably made the public hospitable to the introspective novel, and, as far as English writing is concerned, preceded it.

It may be also that fiction tends inevitably to become the literature of escape, and that the reading public, or that section of it which seeks the truth, will turn increasingly to the fiction-flavored biographies which have recently been appearing in such great numbers. The men who write them have learned much from the art of fiction, and more than any of their predecessors in the field, seek to expose the pattern of their subjects' lives. They therefore select such details as develop the design, they deepen the shadows and heighten the lights, so that their results, though true in the main, have all the lure of lies. How far the product is legitimate biography is another question and a large one. Naturally, they choose to write about extraordinary men, individuals rather than types with a difference, and

their originality is therefore different in kind from that to which a writer of fiction is limited. For readers, knowing that Napoleon and George Sand and Barnum really lived, accept their unique qualities for the truth, as they never have accepted and never will accept the unique qualities of fictitious characters. Sanderson of Oundle, a schoolmaster, has recently appeared in this galaxy; Bernal Diaz has come up for the third time within the year, and Las Casas may be expected to emerge shortly. After these, we may soon have a thickening flight of academic and Central American lives; still later, a drama with Dr. Arnold or Porfirio Diaz as the central character may play to crowded houses, and then, at long last, there will be a brisk demand for my stories.

I begin to grow hopeful. "Damn the present! I will write for posterity!"—unless Dr. Johnson was altogether right.

In which case, I am, and may remain, a blockhead.

A Schooner Yacht

THE PERFECT SHIP. By WESTON MARTYR. New York: Ivers Washburn. 1928. \$3.50.

Reviewed by ALFRED F. LOOMIS

HERE is an enthralling book by an amateur sailor who has something authentic to tell us. Weston Martyr has sailed many seas in small boats, he has his idea of what a small boat should be, and he has written his story so sympathetically that we share his happy experiences in building and sailing his "perfect ship." The outline of the story is simple: Two men, fed up with New York office life, sink all their money in the building of a small schooner yacht. They go down to Nova Scotia to watch the workmen and have a hand in the building. When the schooner is ready for sea, they put off on a trial trip to the middle of the North Atlantic, enduring gales and squalls and calms and lovely sailing weather, and wind up in New York when their food gives out. Just as starvation is about to become acute they sell their schooner for more than it cost to build her. One poignant adventure and the story ends.

This, you will say, is a plain, unvarnished tale that can have no conceivable appeal for anyone not fanatically interested in the construction and handling of sailboats. But the case is otherwise. Although possessed of an overwhelming interest in yacht cruising, I confess to a total lack of interest in the fashioning of boats that will cruise. I expected to skim the first half of the book and devour the cruising half. Instead I learned that building a boat is as fascinating as sailing her—when the author has the literary gift to make it seem so.

And this gift Martyr has. Take, for instance, the brief catalogue of the sights he saw on landing in the maritime town of Sheldon, N. S.:

"Sailmaker—sewing by hand the seams in a mainsail, 75 feet in the hoist!

Blacksmith—making hanks. (Communication between Smith and Helper apparently telepathic.)

Irate old gentleman—hoisting dory out of bedroom window. (Reasons unknown.)

Black gentleman—putting eye-splice in a wire bobstay. (Plough steel. Gory job.)

Spar-maker—shaping mast with adze. (Highly exciting.)

Etc., etc., etc."

The inference is immediately drawn that the blacksmith, the black gentleman, and even the irate old gentleman who yanks dories out of bedroom windows, will play their parts in the building of the perfect ship, and that what they have a hand in will be worth reading about. So the event proves. All Sheldon contributes something either of labor or material to the building of the schooner, and by the time she is slid down the ways you know as much about a friendly, congenial community as you do about the building of the ship.

In fact the chief charm of the book—and one which is too often a stranger to yachting literature—is its warmth of human interest. As an abstract subject ship carpentry may leave you cold, but you could never be indifferent to a master craftsman who, like Tom the shipwright, could "Take an unused ordinary leadpencil, throw it on the ground, and tread on one end of it with his bare foot. Smite the end on which he stood seven times with a razor-sharp adze, turning the pencil around with his foot meanwhile. Stoop down, pick up, and hold out for inspection one pencil with a perfectly sharpened point. Time, six and two-fifths seconds by the stop-watch."

If you have been looking for a book that will fathom the mystery of a yachtsman's longing for a perfect ship you will find it here. "The Perfect Ship" is a classic of marine literature.