

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*.

F. J. B., Montreal, Canada, has come upon, in the preface of a book dated 1834, a reference to "the romance of Rodrigo," and has not been able to locate this character in any poetry with which he is familiar.

THIS can be no other than Roderigue Diaz de Bivar, surnamed "The Cid," born at Burgos, 1030, died in 1099, the hero of heroes in Spain—unless one puts before him Our Lord Don Quixote, who according to Unamuno is at this day crying aloud in the wilderness, and will cry until the wilderness hears and is transformed into a resounding forest.

The Spanish chronicle of the Cid belongs to the thirteenth century and was first printed in 1544; the Spanish poem dates from 1207; in 1615 there were 102 Spanish ballads of the Cid in existence. Southey made an English version of the chronicle in 1808; Lockhart translated into English verse eight of the ballads, and in 1845 George Dennis made a connected tale of it all, in prose and verse. It may be added that it was for his "Le Cid" in 1636 that Corneille was first called "le grand."

But it was not from any of these that I recognized the gentleman, in spite of the fact that the only Rodrigo appearing in the dictionaries of literary characters is the second villain in "Othello." No, I made the acquaintance of Ruy Diaz de Bivar and his *Ximena* through "Zig-zag Journeys in Spain," one of a series of travel books popular in my youth, and more than popular with me. In these a club of boys took journeys every vacation (one book came out every Christmas in time for your stocking) under the charge of a teacher who improved all the occasions up to the historical hilt. It sounds stodgy when you tell it, but the books were really so good that I wish someone would make new ones along the same lines. This is not altogether my own idea: I have heard several other devotees of the series suggest it: they could not be reprinted, being by now outdated.

The mother of S. T. B., Ballard Vale, Mass., rests her eyes by having ask-me-another questions read to her, and has exhausted those published by the Viking Press and "Ask me a Bible Question" published by the Century. He is looking for general information tests for her use.

I LIKE "Answer This One," by F. P. A. and Harry Hansen (Clode); it was certainly produced under distinguished auspices. "I Ought to Know That," by Berton Braley and G. B. Hill (Appleton) is a good memory-test: I trailed along with it for some time in the newspapers. "What's Your Average?" by A. H. Macrae and others (Dutton), is another of this sort, and Carolyn Wells has one, "Ask Me a Question" (Winston).

I HATE to think of the vocal commotion that must have been produced when all the readers of this department tried to pronounce Miguel as the types made S. T. B. pronounce it, in a recent number of this review. By shifting a hyphen you will please claw it back to Mi-guel. Oh the little more and how much it is!

M. S., New York, says that George Herbert Palmer's "Life of Alice Freeman Palmer" should have been added to the books about happy marriages, as it is a favorite gift to newly-weds. "This comparatively small volume is not merely a biography of that rare spirit who was once the president of Wellesley College, but is also the beautiful chronicle of an unusually happy marriage. The author was, of course, for many years professor of philosophy at Harvard and himself no unimportant personage."

E. F. H., Cincinnati, O., asks for books on domestic architecture, and is especially interested in the story-and-a-half bungalow: he is also looking for a modern book on interior decoration, presumably for this house.

THERE is the popular "The Bungalow Book" by C. E. White (Macmillan); "Bungalows, Their Design, Construction and Furnishing," by H. H. Saylor (McBride), now in its fourth revised edition; Comstock's "Bungalows, Camps, and Mountain Houses" (Comstock, Ithaca, N. Y.), and "The Book of Bungalows," by R. R. Phillips (Scribner), all of which are practical and none expensive. But no one in the case of E. F. H. contents himself with one aspect of the subject only. He may as

well be told at once that he may draw upon the ideas in Gray's "House and Home" (Lippincott), Allen's "The Smaller House of To-Day" (Scribner), "Your House," by J. R. McMahon (Minton, Balch), "Homes of Character," by Mead and Higgins (Dodd, Mead), and "The Smaller American House," by E. B. Power (Little, Brown), without spending more than three dollars for each or dealing with publications of any but recent date. Nor is his collection likely to stop there: I have been for some time providing new titles for the prospective builder of a small house in a suburb of this city, for which the lot is paid for; the owners are handicapped in their collection of funds for building purposes because they have bought so many books of plans and pictures. For example, books like "Small French Buildings," a collection of full-page photographs of farms, manor-houses, and small châteaux so clear in detail as to be most alluring. I have suggested it more than once to home-planners, for the plans are with the pictures. Also there is a new one, "Small Manor Houses and Farmsteads in France," by Eberlein and Ramsdell (Lippincott), and another, "Cottages, Manoirs, and Other Minor Buildings of Normandy and Brittany," by W. D. Foster (Architectural Book Co.), neither of which is cheap, but look at the plates. It was partly the Scribner book that made me choose farming country in northern France for a walking tour, but it was only a natural taste for getting off the road that landed me in one farmyard there, close enough to find out what made the sides look as if they had been shingled in dark blue. It was, I discovered, the oval metal plates set upon stalls of stock winning prizes in local fairs, corresponding to blue ribbons; this being the home of Percherons, this farm had been gathering so many trophies until I thought them part of the original architectural scheme.

This, however, has nothing to do with the case; let us return to the road with the news that "Smaller Houses and Gardens of Versailles," is another beautiful picture-and-plan book (Pencil Points Press, N. Y.), and that for six dollars you may get Lawrence Weaver's "Cottages: Their Planning, Design, and Materials" (Scribner). There is no end to the beautiful books about English domestic architecture, especially cottages, and a good beginning may be made with "Old English Houses," by J. A. Gutch (Dutton), which is really a history of the effect of changing social customs and ideals of comfort upon the construction of the homes of England. "English Architecture in a Country Village," by A. H. Plaisted (Longmans, Green), is a little new book that will be useful here.

The pictures in "Old Houses of New England," by Knowlton Mixer (Macmillan), though not large are so beautiful and so many that I cannot leave them out of this collection. Here are buildings of all types to be found in this part of the world; the distinctive architecture of the Cape, the fine dwellings of Bennington and Exeter, Salem mansions and Connecticut places, and the homes on Nantucket. The architecture is built into the history, and anyone with New England blood will enjoy the book. There are hints for the modern builder in Sarah Comstock's "Roads to the Revolution," too (Macmillan); this is a careful retracing and documenting of the places familiar to history, with anecdotes and hints as to tours through these regions. The pictures are clear and there are many of them.

And now that we are on the subject, why conceal from the world that there are several new and pleasantly written accounts of the development of architecture, intended for the general reader? "The A. B. C. of Architecture," by Matlock Price (Dutton), goes further indeed, and is evidently intended not only to inform an outsider concerning the work of an architect, but to make it possible for him to get something of a start for himself at home. The drawings in this book are most interesting. "The Story of the Art of Building," by P. L. Waterhouse (Appleton), is a brief and informing survey, and a sketch of what we have done here is given in T. E. Tallmadge's "Story of Architecture in America" (Norton).

Compleat Collector

(Continued from preceding page)

which is due to the fact that it has recognized the value of bibliographical research in solving historical problems. Limiting itself strictly within the geographical and chronological boundaries of its field, this society has done more to elucidate the history of American printing than any other organization. The twenty-sixth volume of its Publications, just issued, adds to this preëminence. The most valuable contribution is a letter, edited with explanatory notes by Professor Chester N. Greenough, written from London in 1702, which reveals the details of the business arrangements which preceded the publication of Cotton Mather's "Magnalia." Significant on account of the outstanding position of this work in colonial literature, this letter has an even greater value as one of the few documents which reveal the relations between booksellers, printers, and authors at that period. It also proves that the literary agent is not a modern innovation.

Almost equally important is a detailed explanation, by Mr. William C. Lane, of why the Harvard senior class changed printers in 1771. It is an effective demonstration of the necessity of going behind the mere imprint of any publication, and of trying to find out why certain works were printed and sold by the persons whose names appear. One minor fact that comes out of Mr. Lane's documents is that it took 3,000 copies of the Commencement Day program to supply the ordinary demand. There could hardly be a more convincing proof of the place which this college festival occupied in the life of the community, in the period just before the outbreak of war with the Mother Country.

The elder sister society, the Massachusetts Historical Society, has likewise printed bibliographical contributions more or less frequently in recent years. Its latest volume of Proceedings contains a list of 437 French Royal Edicts which concern America, dated from 1629 to 1789, compiled by Worthington C. Ford from material in the Paris archives, the Public Record Office at London, and a single American collection, the New York Public Library. The same volume prints a number of autograph letters of general literary interest, for which those interested in such things might not think of looking in a local historical society's record of meetings. These are from Robert Browning, Thomas Carlyle, James Fenimore Cooper, William Cowper, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walter Scott, and Alfred Tennyson. There is also a letter from William Blackstone of the Commentaries.

Familiarity with very rare modern books leads to some curious aberrations, and one of these led the house of Dutton to an undue modesty in the format of their booklet relating the story of their seventy-five years as a bookselling firm. The like-

liest explanation is that they realized that the greatest rarities are the least pretentious in appearance, and they had a natural desire to have their book become scarce. But it was not quite fair to their friends, for this little pamphlet well deserves a finer dress, worthy of the concrete evidence it affords of "The Joys and Sorrows of Selling Books from 1852 to 1927, Compiled from a Variety of Original Sources and Lavishly Illustrated with Prints and Engravings." Incidentally, there are a number of new and good anecdotes illustrating the humors of bookselling, which may be expected to crop up from now on, as "fillers" in the columns of bookish periodicals.

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A significant episode in the cultural history of America concerns two well-to-do Boston gentlemen, who gave up other occupations in order to learn all they could about Spain. One of them studied its history and wrote literature; the other studied literature and wrote history, a history that long held its place as best work on the subject. Both gathered libraries which place them in the front rank of American collectors; one gave his books to the Public Library and the other to Harvard, and the Ticknor and Prescott collections are still important factors in maintaining the prestige of the Boston and Harvard libraries.

It is not easy to understand how George Ticknor and William Hickling Prescott, the latter all but blind, living in the Boston of ninety years ago, managed to acquire a sufficiency of correct information to secure a place among the world's recognized scholars. This has been made easier by the publication, from the precious accumulations in the library of the Hispanic Society of America, of the letters written by these two Bostonians to their friend, Pascual de Gayangos, who was one of the foremost Spanish intellectuals of their day.

Gayangos was, first of all, a well-informed bibliophile, and it is evident from these letters that he must have enjoyed thoroughly the occupation which their friendship gave him, of buying books for them. Ticknor sent him the catalogue of his library, already large, and drafts on Paris of 500 francs at a time, which was then enough to cover, in advance, the outlay for a box full of sixteenth and seventeenth century literary treasures. Anyone who has looked over the Ticknor shelves at the Boston library, or studied the printed catalogue, will bear witness to the sound judgment and discriminating knowledge of books which the Spanish scholar showed in carrying out his commission. The letters which have now been made public by the Hispanic Society of New York add many details which are of importance, not only for a better knowledge of the individuals, but even more for the light they throw upon the cultural conditions in this country at that period.

SAGUSTO

by
CECIL ROBERTS

author of
SAILS OF SUNSET
at all bookstores \$2
Doubleday, Doran

He was a soldier of fortune . . . traitors had stolen her kingdom. At the head of a cut-throat crew he stormed the mysterious island . . . laid it with his heart at her feet. SAGUSTO—what a gorgeous romance!

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A simple and constructive outline of an appealing philosophy of religion that opens up a new and pure world of thoughts. \$2.50

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EDEN
By Murray Sheehan
\$2.00
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IRON AND SMOKE
fully compensates for the long wait. It is three years since Sheila Kaye-Smith published her last work. In this new book she shows the same great strength of character development as in "Joanna Godden." \$2.50.

Biographies of eighteenth century French women who had salons are always fascinating. This one by Marquis de Segur is no exception. **JULIE DE LESPINASSE** had much charm and a tantalizing attraction for men. Here is the story of her love affairs. \$5.00.

We have just had an anonymous note from one who signs himself Mark VII: "It was a great adventure. Even though what I have written may be termed 'indiscreet truth,' it will be devoured eagerly, as scraps of candour always are. **THE SUBALTERN ON THE SOMME** will convey to you the chaos, the din, the dirt, the humor and the horror of war." \$2

Indispensable today for every automobile with traffic conditions as they are, is a volume of short stories. We recommend **MR. FORTUNE, PLEASE**, by H. C. Bailey. A baffling collection of mysterious tales - guaranteed not to bore you during the long intermissions on Fifth Ave. \$2.00.

The Renaissance--that wicked rebirth of education - is the background for these stories, the **FACETIAE OF POGGIO** - translated by Edward Storer. They are tales of a witty, risqué nature. "The Breeches of St. Francis" tells how a monk...but read it. \$3



TWO books important for you to read are Marcel Proust's two volumes of "Cities of the Plain" (A. & C. Boni), translated by C. K. Scott-Moncrieff (limited edition) and Lion Feuchtwanger's "The Ugly Duchess" (Viking Press). We have as yet read neither, but have recently heard more talk about them than concerning any recent volumes. . . .

When we saw the title, "The Earth Upsets," we thought at first that it was a new volume of poems by Clement Wood, following his "Glad of Earth" and "The Earth Turns South." Instead it is a volume by Chase Salmon Osborn, published by the Waverly Press of Baltimore and dealing with the various motions of the earth, not to mention seismic disturbances. When, from a rapid survey of the text, you begin to realize just how unstable this old solid *terra firma* really is--why, you'll immediately forget all about it again, as we all do, and go on about your business, as we all continue to do, just as though the earth were quite flat and there were no solar system at all. . . .

Louis Untermeyer's present quarters in London on Eaton Square are, he says, "two chapters away from George Moore's Ebury Street and round the corner from Noel Coward." . . .

Katharine Lee Bates writes us kindly with reference to our hint of illness in the family. She informs us that she, regretfully, suffered from an attack of tonsillitis a year ago, and, upon emerging from it, found herself writing the following, which, she says, "entertained the doctor as a 'clinical record':"

ASPIRIN AVENUE
(A Record of Tonsillitis)
Through Aspirin Avenue, hung with tapestries, marching all night long,
Solemn splendor of crimson tapestries, swaying tapestries,
Velvet tapestries waved by bells that peal a funeral song!
(My friend will be buried tomorrow.)
Crimson tapestries, heavy and rich, veiling the fronted walls
Of arrogant streets! Are we in Spain as the Corpus Christi falls
On gray Toledo, Ghost of cities? Bells pealing all night long!
(Chiming with my sorrow.)
Through Aspirin Avenue, pylons and pyramids, driven all night long!
Hoary temples and shafts and pyramids, moonlight pyramids,
Captive chain-fast collar to collar, marshalled by drum and gong!
("Ice-bag might relieve her.")
Oh, but our collars, our iron collars, hot are our collars and tight!
Luckless prisoners of the battle, driven by whips all night,
Stumbling on to the crack of whips and the clangors of drum and gong!
("Runs up quite a fever.")

In regard to literature of the West, do you know Edward Eberstadt's Historical Publications? The Eberstadt address is 55 West 42nd Street. The fifth publication, now ready for immediate delivery (the regular edition priced at \$12.50) is "The Jour-

nals and Letters of Major John Owen, Pioneer of the Northwest, 1850-1871." This is transcribed and edited from the original manuscripts in the Montana Historical Society and the Collection of W. R. Coe, Esq., prepared by Seymour Dunbar and with notes to Owen's texts by Paul C. Phillips, Professor of History in the University of Montana. The work is in two volumes and contains two maps and thirty plates. . . .

We sorrow for the death of G. F. Scotson-Clark, once art editor of the *Century Magazine* and the writer of most delectable works on gastronomy. As lately as December 12th of the year just vanished we received a very pleasant letter from him urging us to stop in at his Red Brick Inn at Westport, Connecticut, if we were ever out that way.

Brillat-Savarin is dead (alack), [he wrote] but Scotson-Clark is alive and on the job. I opened last Saturday. Huge success. I am now booking tables for Christmas-tide and New Year's with the identical Christmas pudding served to Mayer Thompson's *bête noir*.

Well, so uncertain is life. . . . Little, Brown and Company, as maybe you don't know, are staging two prize competitions. The first is a \$4,000 competition conducted jointly with *Boys' Life* for a new story for boys based on the principles of the Boy Scout Law and Oath. The competition ends July 1st, 1928. The second is a \$2,500 competition for the best book on American history, the judges being James Truslow Adams, Worthington C. Ford, and Allan Nevins. This competition closes October 1st, 1928. For particulars concerning both competitions, write to Little, Brown and Company. . . .

The story of Baron Richthofen, the great German ace, which has appeared serially in *Liberty*, told by Floyd Gibbons, is now published in book form under the same title, "The Red Knight of Germany," by Doubleday, Doran. . . .

Have we said that we found an advance copy of Isadora Duncan's autobiography as fascinating and enthralling a volume as we have read for some time? Boni & Liveright is bringing it out. It is not, according to our lights, that the book is, as they say, "written with great literary distinction," but that it is the full expression of a personality undoubtedly one of the most extraordinary of our time. It is full of spirit and color and unquenchable fire. . . .

Dr. James W. Walker of Chicago, referring to Allan Westcott's letter in the *Nest* of December 24th, sends us a copy of the following letter in his own possession. It is dated June 15th, 1912, from Bate-man's, Burwash, Sussex. It reads James W. Walker, Esq.,

Dear Sir:
In reply to your letter of May 29th, Mr. Rudyard Kipling desires me to tell you that the Red Gods are the gods of the chase.

The Seven Seas are the N. and S. Atlantic, N. and S. Pacific, Mediterranean, Indian Ocean, and Channel Seas.

Yours truly,
M. Quarrier-Hogg, Secretary.
. . . Thanking you kindly,
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by Roger Burlingame
Author of "Susan Shane"

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