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The Wits' Weekly

Conducted by EDWARD DAVISON

Competition No. 31. A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the best Elegy on the old Back Bay Station at Boston. (Entries should reach *The Saturday Review* office not later than the morning of May 28th.)

Competition No. 32. Three prizes of five dollars each are offered for the best epigrams on one or all of the following subjects. E. Tunney's lecture on Shakespeare at Yale. 2. The forthcoming presidential election. 3. The death of Thomas Hardy. (Entries should reach *The Saturday Review* office not later than the morning of June 4th.)

Competitors are advised to read carefully the rules printed below.

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH COMPETITION

A prize of fifteen dollars was offered for the best short poem in Analysed Rhyme. Out of nearly a hundred entries I have chosen fifteen to send to Mr. Frank Kendon, the inventor of the new rhyme, who has been asked to award the prize. The winner's name will be announced as soon as Mr. Kendon's decision is received from England. In the meantime a few of the outstanding entries must be printed. Readers who did not see my recent explanations of Analysed Rhyme may be interested in a brief re-statement of the details.*

The poet takes two such words as "flame" and "brief," but separates the vowel from the consonantal sounds before looking for his rhymes. The "a" of flame is united with the "f" of brief; and the "e" of brief with the "m" of flame. This simple analysis produces the sounds "afe" and "eem" as a basis for the required rhymes. Thus safe, chafe, dream, gleam, and all true rhymes of these words, provide analysed rhymes for use in connection with brief, flame, and all their true rhymes. The principle can be best studied in the poem, quoted below, though not all of these are perfect examples.

A large number of the contestants failed to grasp the essential scheme. G. W. Mitchell, for instance, offered an excellent poem; but his intended rhyming sounds—"look," "dream," "seek," "do,"—were unacceptable. "Gloom," or a word of similar sound, was necessary instead of the final "do." Again, in one of his entries, Homer M. Parsons merely resolved the discords of certain half-rhymes which have long been allowed to pass as true rhymes.

*Soft may thy petals, rose of the shadows,
Lie on her bosom. South wind, so gentle,
Bearing the scent of the clover-clad meadows,
Whisper my love to her. Night,
Draw thy mantle.*

This only faintly avails itself of the advantages of Analysed Rhyme. Mr. Parsons utilises the new rhyme scheme more elaborately in another poem which is printed below. Perhaps the most elaborate entry was *Penelope* by Deborah C. Jones.

*All the clear lamplight on her hair's warm amber,
Lady Penelope, when day was done
Laid her still hands against the carved timber
Of oak about the door, and watched where ran
Red wine, ungrudging poured and careless cupped.
Only Telemachus looked dark and thin,
Uncordial near the door, his mind still wrapped
(While his eyes watched) in some grim-binding slumber
Of brooding dream; slack-muscled, sombre-lipped.
Ah! Few the hours, Penelope; so soon
Trampling and tumult, and the arrow's flight;
Then long security, the quiet wine
Of home, and at dusk the memory-breathing flute.*

*These were cursorily discussed in a review of Frank Kendon's "Poems and Sonnets" (*SATURDAY REVIEW*, April 14); and in full detail in the essay "Analysed Rhyme" in Mr. Davison's volume "Some Modern Poets" (Harper & Bros.).

Miss Jones calls attention to the sonnet-like rhyme structure of this poem. The vowels rhyme aba abc abc, and the consonants aba beb cac. This is interesting; but there is perhaps more to be said for the form of sonnet which employs twelve analysed rhymes and two true rhymes in the concluding lines. E. Murray and G. W. Mitchell wrestled effectively with the ordinary sonnet convention in this alternative way. Other names that deserve honorable mention, pending Mr. Kendon's choice, are Marshall M. Brice, Dilys Bennett, Helen Lathrop, Dalmar Devening, Elspeth, B. L. Gardner, Katharine Garvin, M. L. M., and A. H. Wilson. Unfortunately there is no space in which to print their poems. Here, however is one verse of Homer M. Parson's imitation "By the Winter Hearth."

*When all the sky is dull as lead,
And flocks of geese go flying South,
And trees are stark in nakedness,
And snowflakes spit, and wires hum loud,
And frost is on the cattle's breath,
And smoke curls up from every house,
Then put the popcorn on the fire;
Bring apples red, and redder;
And toast your toes and drown your care
In a jolly jug of cider!*

And "Snow on the Hills" by Frances H. Gaines, a poem perhaps rather under-sung.

*Softly as dusk the first white snow-jall came,
With scarce a whisper all the still night through.
At dawn, what dazzling glory in my room!
What loveliness on all the landscape lay.
Such kindly beauty, hiding all winter's starkness!
The huddled trees wore warm new shawls of white;
Dead garden, frozen field, now wore the likeness
Of the shining clouds, strayed down to rest, apart.
But ah, how soon this silence from the sky
Will melt, and rush away from hill and field,
Its new-found voice roaring, exultant, wild,
"On to the river! Down to the sea, the sea!"*

Also L. M.'s "Song Against Summer."

*Again the roses,
Again the rain,
The glad heart praises,
The sad makes moan.
No new thing rises;
All's as before.
Yet paler the roses,
Colder the fire
Of the sun, and dimmer
The glory of June.
O Time, consumer
Of paladin,
Of prince and lady
And mythic god,
Of each fair body—
O Time, unstayed
By prayer or praises,
To me alone
Bring no more roses,
No summer rain.*

All three poems, like most of this week's experiments, are insubstantial. But it would be unfair to expect much more than a trial tune from one who attempts a new instrument for the first time. It should be possible, however, with practice, to learn

to think in Analysed Rhyme no less than in ordinary rhyme, though never, perhaps, with quite the same ease. That remains to be seen.

RULES

Competitors failing to comply with the following rules will be disqualified. Envelopes should be addressed to Edward Davison, *The Saturday Review of Literature*, 25 West 45th Street, New York City. All MSS. must be legible—typewritten if possible—and should bear the name or pseudonym of the author. Competitors may offer more than one entry. MSS. cannot be returned. The Editor's decision is final and *The Saturday Review* reserves the right to print the whole or part of any entry.

The New Books

Miscellaneous

(Continued from preceding page)

relation to other colonizing movements, including the settlement of the American West. "What the New West meant to young America that the New East meant to medieval Germany. Each region beckoned the pioneer, the young and lusty of every generation, who sought for cheap lands and new freedom in the wilderness. What Jackson and Clay, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois meant to the history of the United States between 1815 and 1850, that Albrecht the Bear and Leopold of Babenberg, Brandenburg, and Austria, meant to Germany in the twelfth century." The parallel is suggestive, but it must not be pushed too far; as in the case of most historical parallels, the differences are quite as suggestive as the resemblances. Professor Thompson does not try to soften the ruthless character of the German conquest, with its cloak of religion and its forcible imposition of German Kultur. At the same time he emphasizes the popular character of the movement toward the East, particularly its agrarian and commercial phases, which are illustrated by abundant maps and diagrams.

THE ELEMENTS OF CRIME (PSYCHO-SOCIAL INTERPRETATION). By BORIS BRASOL. Oxford University Press. 1927. \$5.

We are trying in America to-day to mete out justice to our Loeb and Leopolds, Remuses and Hickmans, under a doctrine of criminal responsibility which goes back to the McNaughten Rules, laid down in England in 1843 and conforming only remotely to present-day psychiatric concepts. Partisan alienists testify before inept jurors, while the public grows increasingly suspicious of psychiatry, in which, if it can be saved from both its friends and its enemies, lies the greatest hope of clearing some of the fog from our courtrooms.

M. Brasol is that *rara avis*, a trained prosecutor with a broad background of research, scientific rather than legalistic in nature. He is therefore able to perform the difficult and necessary feat of pointing the way to reconciling the legal aspects of crime with the social and psychological aspects. Concerning himself with studying the underlying causes of criminality and not with registering its external manifestations or describing modes of investigation and prevention, he analyzes in this work, first, the more important social causes and, second, the psycho-physical characteristics of the criminal.

The major social causes of criminality he finds in economic factors, although he disagrees with the Marxian theory of crime, in the virtual decay of religion, the tendency toward destruction of the family, the predominance of materialistic and mechanistic ideology in education, the spread of indiscriminating journalism, the perversion of literature and art, and the inadequacy of legislation. His discussion of these causes draws on both American and European evidence, but his conclusions are obviously weighted heavily by his opinions of the Soviet régime in Russia, from which he is now an émigré after serving as prosecuting attorney of the St. Petersburg Supreme Court. M. Brasol is perhaps too pessimistic over the present trend of social forces throughout the world. One can only agree, however, with his conclusions as to what constitute the major social factors promoting that egocentric tendency in the individual which he calls the generic cause of crime.

(Concluded on page 872)

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*. Mrs. Becker's summer headquarters will be at 2 Bramerton St., Chelsea, London.

H. C. F., Brooklyn, N. Y., asks if there have been recent additions to "the literature of escape, such as Dunsany, James Stephens, and sometimes Barrie have provided for those still willing to take the supernatural for granted."

THE American foot-traveler heading toward Stonehenge from Old Sarum wonders with every stride how anything so small as England can hold anything so large as Salisbury Plain. The reader of present-day fiction marvels in like manner that in a civilization so compact and congested as England's, there should be so much room and time for the vast reaches of the marvellous and the undaunted survivals of pagan joy. With all our wide open spaces, with all the time there is, waiting for us, there has not been room in American fiction for a fairy, an incantation, a draught of magic, since "Thunder on the Left," save for the imperturbable Mr. Nathan's "The Woodcutter's House" (Bobbs), till Esther Forbes offered us this Spring "A Mirror for Witches" (Houghton), and even here the loving huntsman is a roving man, and the cool eye of modern psychology overlooks all. It has not Lolly Willowes's genial acceptance of the supernatural, but it is for all that a genuine escape into the unearthly by the right, honest, historical road,—the complete title being "A Mirror for Witches in which is reflected the Life, Machinations, and Death of Famous Doll Bilby, who with a more than feminine perversity, preferred a Demon to a Mortal Lover. Here is also told how and why a Righteous and Most Awful JUDGEMENT befell her, destroying both Corporeal Body and Immortal Soul"—this taking place near Salem. The novel may thus be recommended with equal earnestness to two quite different sets of readers.

But British authors of to-day produce pure fantasy in such profusion that the Viking Press alone has published a shelf-ful. "Lolly" led off, then Sylvia Townsend Warner's second idyl, "Mr. Fortune's Maggot"; then Edith Olivier's "The Love Child," genuine parthenogenesis, in which one human being actually creates another out of space by the power of loneliness. Then came Bea Howe's "A Fairy Leapt Upon my Knee," introducing the only quite convincing fairy in adult literature, and remembering even Tinker Bell, I still say so. This is the fairy for which at an early age I built cabins out of match-sticks in the dining-room flower-pots under the palms—not that I believed one would come there in the night, but in case—This creature, somewhat damaged and disreputable, bumps into the lives of two young people for whom she cares not at all and at whom she only buzzes angrily, but just her being there opens their eyes for them.

Now comes from the Viking the best of all these, T. F. Powys's "Mr. Weston's Good Wine." Skittish readers should be warned that there can be no doubt that the travelling merchant in the Ford is none other than the First Person of the Trinity, passing through Folly Down for much the same purpose that, according to Jerome, the Second Person passed through the third floor back. There is no theatricalism about this robust and tender story, and, for all its pungent village humor, no flippancy.

Though James Stephens has given us this year, in "Etched in Moonlight" (Macmillan), something to stand with his best, I cannot advise it as an escape out of everyday, even if the leading story is a dream within a dream. The realism even of the double-dreaming is so compelling that one finds himself glancing into the glass to make sure that he is still there, and as for "Hunger," see what it does to your ideas of unemployment! Donn Byrne, who stands for Ireland as much as for America, escapes out of to-day into the Dark Ages in "Crusade" (Little), and aghast at false followers of the Cross, plunges for protest into Islam. But an American author who has just burst the barriers of time and space as lightly as if they were the tissue on a circus hoop is Edward Hope, whose "Alice in the Delighted States" has just been given to the world by the Dial Press. Given, but they won't all take it; when these entrancing outbursts were taking place in the *Herald-Tribune* one might tell from the face of one of this newspaper's readers across a Subway train, when he had come upon it. He either scowled bitterly or beamed from ear to ear.

As one who did not scowl, I am sending this about to certain of my friends, here and overseas, in whose newspaper instalments there are resented gaps. Or take the case of the advertising man in Harford Powell's "The Virgin Queen" (Little), who realized with the production of the first startling sentence of this book that he couldn't stand his job one more moment, turned it over to his partner, bought a manor-house not far from Kenilworth, and became involved in one of the most amusing adventures of the season. The gayety of this novel never loses breath, and it makes an ideal steamer book, but there is a genuine "escape" in it, and you are permitted to wonder if this has not been into the supernatural.

B. W., New York, has frequent inquiries for books on problems concerning sex relations, and asks for a brief list.

THE best book for the information of children—which means in most cases for the information of their parents—is "Growing Up," by Karl de Schweinitz (Macmillan), prepared with the cooperation of an imposing list of medical, social, pedagogical and psychiatric authorities and agencies, but far from awesome in its text or general arrangement. Its strong point is its straightforward vocabulary and corresponding directness in statement. In this a number of other books for instruction of young children are suggested. For older readers there are "From Youth into Manhood," by Winfield S. Hall (Association Press), and "For Girls and the Mothers of Girls," by Mary G. Hood (Bobbs): the evolution of sex is the subject of Geddes and Thomson's "Sex" in the Home University Library (Holt). I infer from the question that such problems as arise in the lives of everyday people are to be the subjects of the needed books, so I suggest Maude Royden's "Sex and Commonsense" (Putnam), as likely to meet the needs of the greater number.

F. S. G., Harrisburg, Ill., asks for a book to accompany a club's study of Italy.

IF this is a "travel club," Clara E. Laughlin's "So You're Going to Rome" (Houghton) would be excellent: such a club should use a map when it makes its program, and mark its progress meeting by meeting, gathering such information as to actual travel as will be useful in case they go and illusion-giving if they must stay at home. I would not advise anything so obvious had I not found to my surprise that it is the last thing most "travel clubs" do. Miss Laughlin's guides are to thousands of American vacationers what she said at the dinner on the *Leviathan* that launched this one, it was possible for books to be—letters of introduction to the great, living or dead. They are also aids to their having a good time. Her advice to those whose funds are small to select one "glory spot" and make inexpensive excursions from that centre instead of trying to tour on too narrow a margin of time and money, makes just as good advice for a study club following routes on paper—a program of five or six cities, with surroundings, gives good results.

F. P. S., Lancaster, Pa., wishes to make a program for club study of Russia, under the heads: Historical Background, The Revolution, Since the Revolution, Russian Literature.

A LEKSANDER KORNILOV'S "Modern Russian History" (Knopf) is the one most Americans read first who are reading on this subject: this goes to 1916 and emphasizes the social and political forces at work since 1801. The one-volume edition published in 1924 has a bibliography. With this I would read and keep on hand for reference "Russia from the Varangians to the Bolsheviks" (Oxford University Press). The first section, beginning with legendary times, closes with the founding of the empire under Ivan III.; the second goes to the death of Catherine II., and the third to the abdication of the late Czar. The authors are Charles Raymond Beazley, Neville Forbes and George Arthur Birkett. For The Revolution—or rather, to start an American reader upon a journey through many a book about the Revolution—the

most satisfactory source of information seems to me to be the series of reports by Edward A. Ross: "Russia in Upheaval," "The Russian Bolshevik Revolution," and "The Russian Soviet Republic," all published by the Century Company. These are temperate without being tepid and let events speak for themselves, the writer's aim being apparently to get them before the reader as clearly as possible for an outsider. The latest of these goes to 1922; since then I have read not a few reports, but the one that seems to me best adapted to the needs of a reading club like this is "Present-Day Russia," by Ivy Lee (Macmillan). This makes no claims to inside information and shows no signs of special literary gifts; Mr. Lee, whose position in finance proves him sufficiently hardheaded to make him a fair witness, spent two weeks in Russia last May.

Before so much as beginning to plan a course in Russian literature, read "The Soul of the Russian Revolution" by Moissaye J. Olgin (Holt), published in the honeymoon days of the Revolution, but staying in print because it shows with singular persuasiveness the development of the revolutionary idea and its manifestations in literature. Maurice Baring's "Outline of Russian Literature" (Holt) is one of the valuable little dollar-volumes of the Home University Library: it goes to 1905; Prince Mirsky's "Modern Russian Literature" is one of the recent additions to the series called "World's Manuals," published by the Oxford University Press at \$1.10. For outlining a reading list these will be very useful. There are now so many translations that following out such a course should not be difficult.

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