

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, 2 Bramerton Street, Chelsea, S. W., London, England.

E. M. J., Clifton Springs, N. Y., is looking for a book on the romance of archaeology, and thinks there was once one with this very title. Gregory Mason's "Silver Cities of Yucatan" and the recent very fascinating "Four Faces of Siva" (Casey) are modern and popular treatments in point," the inquirer says, "but I am also anxious to read something recent concerning excavations in Egypt and the Orient."

James Baikie's "Life of the Ancient East" (Macmillan) might quite as well have been called "The Romance of Archaeology"; it is an explanation and record of how excavations are made, filled with the spirit of the true explorer of the past, and able to communicate to an unusual degree the sense of impending thrill that must be ever present in these enterprises. The excavations in question are in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Greece; I have been trailing along after archaeologists in more modern localities, but still in search of relics of a considerable antiquity, for I have been walking the Wall of Hadrian—which our school-books told us passed through lonely lands, and they did not in the least exaggerate. Mile after mile you can walk, after you have left the comfortable George Inn at Chollerford and the almost completely excavated Roman station of Cilernum nearby, and watch the Great Wall riding the crest of hill after hill, from whose tops you can see but one dark ancient farmstead at a time and sometimes not that, with heather still staining the northward horizon as it did when the Centurion in "Puck of Pook's Hill" was on duty there. At Amboglanno (the camps still keep their Roman names even on the lips of the countryfolk) we came upon archaeologists at work, and it was quite thrilling enough, if I never go to Egypt. I have read all I could lay hand upon concerning the Wall, the best being Jessie Mothersole's "Hadrian's Wall," but for a brief account with fine pictures the

best by far is to be found in "Wonders of the Past," a four-volume survey of exploration and reconstruction, edited by J. A. Hammerton from articles by specialists, and published by Putnam at \$5 a volume and worth at least all of that. It has also the best article on Stonehenge; indeed, wherever any "wonder of the past" that I have seen is treated, it is treated in a more satisfactory manner than in any guide-book I have seen. So I wholeheartedly recommend it, as a family picture-book that may soak into young consciousnesses and make lasting results. The "Cambridge Ancient History" (Macmillan) is accompanied by a marvellous book of plates of ancient art and excavated remains.

Professor Baikie's "Century of Excavation in the Land of the Pharaohs" (Revell) is a similarly inspiring account of what has been done in Egypt; Arthur Weigall's "Glory of the Pharaohs" (Putnam), besides bringing back much of the life of the time, contains personal experiences of the author in excavating; Robert Koldewey's "Excavations at Babylon" (Macmillan: \$10) is a detailed, carefully illustrated record up to 1912; H. R. H. Hall's "Ægean Archaeology" (Medici Society) shows the results of excavations of prehistoric Greece. But Professor Baikie's first-named work gives a general idea of what has been done in all three regions, and makes a fine beginning-book. And now, at just this point in the narrative, comes Holt's fall list, with the news that in October they are to publish "The Romance of Archaeology," by R. V. D. Magoffin and Emily Davis, full of thrills and fine photographs. So here is an advance note for it.

H. W. C., Terre Haute, Ind., says that as there is no Baedeker for French North Africa other than for those cities on the coast that come in the Mediterranean volume, he would like whatever there is in the way of travel literature for this region.

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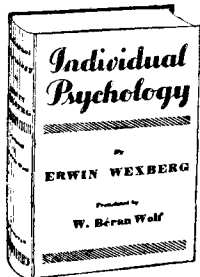
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Individual Psychology

by ERWIN WEXBERG, M.D.

Translated by W. Bérán Wolfe, M. D.

COSMOPOLITAN BOOK CORPORATION

THE Baedeker to which reference is made is, of course, "The Mediterranean, Sea-ports and Sea Routes" (Scribner), which includes only the coasts of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. A "Blue Guide," one of the admirable English series edited by Findlay Muirhead (Macmillan), was announced at the opening of the present season as in course of preparation, to cover "French Northern Africa."

"What About North Africa?" by Hamish McLaurin (Scribner); "Rambles in North Africa," by Albert Wilson (Little, Brown), a large illustrated work; "From Corsair to Riffian," by Isabel Anderson (Houghton Mifflin), which includes Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco; "Morocco from a Motor," by Paul Vernon (Macmillan), illustrated in color, and "Algeria from Within," by R. V. C. Bodley (Bobbs-Merrill), are all of fairly recent publication.

G. M. V., Cambridge, Mass., needs a Spanish cook-book, written in English, but with recipes for characteristic Spanish dishes, especially "arroz valenciano."

IF such there be, will someone let us know? Some months ago I was asked concerning the public there might be for a volume of ancient Spanish-American dishes such as brighten life in our own Southwest. I thought there would be a demand for such information, but the literary agents later consulted by the author did not agree, and so far as I know, this book was never printed. At the time, I looked for Spanish cookery books and found none in English. I wish there were, and that I might therein find how "the Spaniard" who keeps the red and yellow restaurant under the arches of Swallow Street, just off Regent Street, manages to blend ripe oranges and olives in just the right proportion in the sauce that surrounds an Iberian chicken.

BEFORE the reply about North Africa gets too far back in this copy, I must tack on a postscript from a letter just received: "Should you ever be asked," says *E. M. F., Wood's Hole, Mass.,* to recommend a very readable book on the architecture of North Africa, you might like to suggest Pierre Champion's "Le Maroc et Ses Villes d'Art."

STEVEN T. BYINGTON, *Ballard Vale, Mass.,* says his abridged edition of the "Tales of Baron Munchausen," published by Ginn in the spring of 1928, may be the book for which recent inquiry was made through this column. "I left out very little of the original Munchausen, which is the part where the famous stories are; of the supplements added later a lot can be left out without sacrificing anything that anyone cares much for. There was some account of the times in which 'Munchausen' was written, and some of the facts I had to record were as good as M's own work." It costs 68 cents.

H. W. B., Fort Collins, Colorado, asks for a book presenting in a popular style the work and theories of Freud, Adler, and Jung, whose own writings are a "bit too much" for this reader.

THERE are several popular summaries or introductions, but I do not know that any of them are easier to understand than the "General Introduction to Psychoanalysis" of Freud himself, published by Liveright. However, André Tridon's book, "Psychoanalysis" (Viking), though it was published ten years ago, gives a summary of the views of Freud, Jung, Adler, and others; other introductions are "Psychoanalysis for Normal People," by G. Coster (Oxford University Press); "Modern Theories of the Unconscious," by W. L. Northridge (Dutton); "The New Psychology and Its Relation to Life," by A. G. Tansley (Dodd, Mead); Brill's "Fundamental Conceptions of Psychoanalysis" (Harcourt, Brace); and one of the best of them all, Beatrice Hinkle's "The Recreating of the Individual" (Harcourt, Brace).

C. K. H. Carrollton, Ga., asks if there are historical or descriptive works about the glass factories of Murano, and if anyone recalls a novel published at least thirty years ago whose heroine, a little girl, worked in a Murano glass factory.

AS for the novel, reports are called for; as for the descriptions, I fear they will have to be picked up in minute pieces from the histories and collector's books about old glass in general. The largest and most luxurious of these is "European Glass," by W. Buckley (Houghton Mifflin), limited edition, \$25; there is also "Old Glass and How to Collect It," by J. S. Lewis (Dodd, Mead); "Old Glass, European and American," by N. Moore (Stokes); and "Collecting Old Glass," a small book by J. H. Yoxall (Doubleday, Doran).

STOKES BOOKS

THE FINGER POST

The best ad for a novel, we sometimes think, would be the author himself if we could reproduce him in the flesh... but, short of making him into a sandwich-man, we haven't yet figured out how to manage it!

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Lest We Forget

WE reprint here an editorial which appeared in the New York Evening Post as long ago as 1911:

Coleridge has a remark somewhere about the danger that a literary man's executors may make sad work of his brains. Of that we have had many examples. But there is a more poignant peril. It is that those in legal charge of a dead writer's documents and letters may be guilty of outrages upon taste and even breaches of good faith, which he in his grave cannot resent, but from which name must suffer. In this city for example, there has been this week a sale of the effects of a well-known figure in our literary world, and in them have been included letters to him by living men of the most intimate and confidential character. These he had treasured, as was his right, but now that he is gone they are as coolly thrown upon the market as if they were merely his ink-stand or candle-snuffers. In some instances these letters have been of so markedly private a nature, being intended for his eye alone and filled with comment upon men and things that could not with propriety even be handed about, much less sold at auction, that their alarmed and mortified authors have been forced to go to the sale themselves and buy them in.

It is little to say that such things add a new terror to death. An indiscreet biographer is bad enough. We remember what a wholesale burning of old letters and diaries set in on the occasion of the publication of Froude's "Life of Carlyle." If such revelations could be made, which of us is safe? That was the horrified question which literary men in England and the United States at once asked themselves, and soon the chimneys were smoking with manuscripts that might make scandalous printing after the owners were dead. We know what Tennyson thought of this sort of breaking every seal and betraying the trust; but it probably never entered into his imagination that an executor could seek to coin money out of letters in which friend breathed confidences to friend. Matters which were so delicate that they could not, either legally or with decency, be published in a biography, it seems to be thought may be knocked down by the auctioneer's hammer to whoever will buy.

In this instance it is only necessary to ask what the dead man himself would have thought and said of such a proceeding, in order to perceive what an affront it is to his memory. Himself of proved fastidiousness in taste, and of the nicest loyalty in friendship, he would have been cut to the quick if he could have fancied such a brutal disposal—or attempt to dispose—of communications of which he would no more have thought of making a public prey than he would of the whispered interchange of lovers. A methodical man, he had kept these letters, along with a mass of others, but the idea of making merchandise of them would have been as foreign to his soul as it would have been cruel. To take a dead man's skull and grow in it a pot of basil is a sweet and wholesome thing compared with this plan of doing something which would be excruciating to him in order to make a pot of money.

A current Spanish novel is entitled, "The Dead Command." In the case referred to, they evidently do not, if their known or easily inferred wishes could be taken as a command. But even the living have some rights! As a mere matter of law, we should suppose that this hawking of the private letters of men still alive and sensitive could be enjoined. They certainly could not be printed without permission; how, then, sold in manuscript? But, of course, the gentlemen involved did not wish to advertise their sense of outrage, or actually to make a bad matter worse by taking legal proceedings. They quietly put up the amount of cash necessary to secure possession of what was really their own all the time. Rather than permit any imputation to rest

upon the discretion of their dead friend, or allow any chance collector to display their secret communings with their old confidant, they were ready to make a pecuniary sacrifice—and for some of them it was considerable—and say no more about it.

We are glad to think that such peculiar displays of callousness in regard to the feelings of both the dead and the living are very rare. But they ought to be entirely impossible. Botanizing on a mother's grave is respectable beside offering to barter away the most cherished and sacred tokens of friendship belonging to the dead.

Perverted Perversity

MONSIEUR VÉNUS. By RACHILDE. Translated by MADELEINE BOYD. Introduction by ERNEST BOYD. Preface by MAURICE BARRÈS. Illustrations by MAJESKA. Limited Edition. New York: Covici, Friede. 1929.

IT is nearly fifty years since "Monsieur Vénus" startled and shocked Paris the unshockable—and its author, for many years a distinguished French novelist, is still alive, a lady of seventy-nine—and the book is at last translated in America. Have we then merely reached our eighteen-nineties? Or are the perversities of the eighteen-nineties an eternal phase of civilization which merely happen to obtain expression in literature at certain periods? "Monsieur Vénus" dates terribly; in its fondness for oriental draperies, perfumes, and hashish it smells of the lamps of Gautier and Baudelaire; and yet it does not date entirely. Its author, to-day Mme. Vallette, wife of the editor of the *Mercur de France*, was then Marguerite Eymery, a girl of twenty, who took the name Rachilde from a medieval Swedish nobleman whom she had called up by table-rapping; she had been writing since the age of twelve and at fourteen had attempted suicide when her parents tried to cure her literary ambitions by means of marriage, but she was still unknown and starving in Paris when in two weeks she wrote "Monsieur Vénus." The book not only made her notorious but—more important—it opened the doors of the symboliste cafés to her and gave her an established place in the radical literary world. Her wild, unbelievable tale, imitative and obviously adolescent as it was, with one or two passages of sheer rant, was still what Maurice Barrès called it, "this marvellous 'Monsieur Vénus'"—marvellous in its clarity, its imaginative boldness, its occasional depth of psychology.

The story is one of perverted perversity. Its Sapphic heroine, the high-born androgynous, Raoule de Vénérande, is enamored of a beautiful and effeminate lout, Jacques Silvert, whom she loves as if he were a woman, making him her mistress and then her wife. Raoule's unsuccessful endeavor to force this marriage upon society, and Silvert's degeneration into the sex anomaly he was destined to become, lead to his virtual assassination to appease her wrath. The complex and twisted psychological situation gives opportunity for the subtle analysis which the Symbolistes enjoyed to dearly, and in which, so far as the novel was concerned, Rachilde pointed the way. Remy de Gourmont, who followed her, had a surer touch, but in comparison with Rachilde's spontaneity he seems almost pedantic. "Monsieur Vénus" is born not of observation or experience, but of dreamful fancy. To the innocent moralist it may be an illuminating illustration of whither the adolescent girl's fancy sometimes tends. To the critic, for whom perversity is a theme like any other, it is of value, aside from its historic interest, for a kind of desperate, feverish imagination, usually chastened, not in content but in style, by a sense of artistic form. The preface by Barrès, the introduction by Ernest Boyd, and the excellent translation by Madeleine Boyd, give cachet to this edition of a work which should not be dismissed—or accepted—in American fashion—as sheer pornography.