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The New Colophon

THE COLOPHON: A BOOK COLLECTOR'S QUARTERLY. Part Five. New York: The Colophon, Ltd. [March] 1931.

THE COLOPHON has so far justified its existence—and the enthusiasm of its responsible founders—as to set forth on its second year. The year 1930 may have seemed a none too auspicious one in which to launch a bookman's journal—and 1931 indubitably is a much more uncertain time. Yet the success of the quarterly in its first year, and the lamentable lack hitherto of a publication devoted to the quieter phases of book collecting, printed in attractive form, warranted a strenuous effort to maintain the venture. The editorial judgment has been good, it seems to me; but I am not so sure of the wisdom of diversified printing. I find the present number less annoying than some of the former ones have been, but on the whole I believe that a more satisfactory unity might be achieved by having each number printed by one printing-office rather than by having separate articles so printed. However, the present plan does at least avoid monotony—that deadly miasma which afflicts so many magazines in the course of time!

The present number includes contributions on various bookish subjects by Charles W. Chesnutt, Pierce Butler, Theodore Dreiser, William M. Ivins, Jr., Paul Johnston, A. Edward Newton, William A. Kittredge, and Elizabeth Robins Pennell; a dry-point by David B. Milne, and a section on Early

Italian Printers' Marks. The printers represented include the Pynson Printers, Canfield & Tack, Marchbanks, Rudge, Printype, Judd & Derweiler, Lakeside Press, Walpole Printing-Office, and the Village Press. There is more homogeneity in the various typographic contributions than has always been the case—at the same time some rather quaint conceits are aired. Tradition is honored by Mr. Chesnutt's article set in Scotch Roman; Mr. Goudy presents his latest type faces as a frame for a reminiscent reprint on Italian printers' marks (which have not in the past lacked attention); Mr. Marchbanks prints Mr. Dreiser's essay in Caslon italic; while for Mr. Ivins's account of Daumier Mr. Rudge has provided a curious lay-out in character with the author's well-known intransigent attitude toward the printing art. Mr. Douglas's arrangement for Mr. Newton's article is perhaps the most interesting as printing. All of the separate formats seem to me on the whole to be bookish—but not so bookish as to be stupid.

Mr. Ivins's "Daumier" is an attempt to restore to favor one of the most skillful of the nineteenth century illustrators. It does not seem to me that Daumier was particularly happy as a designer for the wood block: his style is far too free and required much too much dexterity from the engraver to be really compatible with wood engraving. But as an illustrator and a draftsman he deserves all of Mr. Ivins's encomiums. In the present day of the half-tone and the line block he would have been quite at home—though it is doubtful if the resulting print would have been as charming as the la-

borious engraved block gives us. And Mr. Ivins's enthusiasms for the illustrated book of the middle of the last century is good to have, for it can never be too strongly emphasized that when the half-tone and the photo-zinc blocks came in, something of charm and value went out of illustration.

Mr. Kittredge's article on Rudolph Ruzicka is a brief but clear account of his productivity, subjoined to which is a useful list of works illustrated by him or about him. Mr. Ruzicka is a solitary figure in American illustration, preserving amidst the hullabaloo of modern design a delicacy and individuality quite uncommon.

The cover design of the current number of the *Colophon* is the best yet achieved—it possesses a fittingness to the purpose which its predecessors have not had. It is from a drawing by William A. Dwiggins.

R.

Horses

THE GRAND NATIONAL, 1839-1930. By DAVID HOADLEY MUNROE. New York: Huntington Press, 1931.

THIS is a detailed account of the races at Liverpool now known as "The Grand National." Like almost all books dealing with horses, it possesses an interest which no treatise on automobiles, for instance, can ever hope to achieve. As George Borrow has it: "Of one thing I am certain, that the reader must be much delighted with the wholesome smell of the stable . . . how cheering, how refreshing, to come in contact with genuine stable hartshorn." An old horse trader of Western Massachusetts, when endeavoring to sell a none too sound animal, used to give the beast a resounding slap on the rump and remark to the possible buyer: "Yes, sir, he's *all hoss*." So with this book: it is "all hoss." Also, it is sound!

The Grand National—then the Grand Liverpool—steeple chase was first run in 1839. The title has not been uniform, and during the war the race was run at Gatwick, near London. The author calls it the "Blue Riband of Steeplechasing," and if its present sophisticated organization lacks the zest of its earlier forms (when the riders set off across-lots for the distant steeple of the neighboring parish church), such a race as

the Grand National attracts its thousands each year.

The present history of the race is a pretty fine piece of book making. (You remember the story of the great Chicago sport and Alderman, Hincky Dink, who was sent to East Aurora to see the "greatest book-maker in America," and was chagrined to find that the quarry was only a printer!) It has a preface by Mr. William V. C. Ruxton, and a note by Mr. E. A. C. Topham, Clerk of the Aintree Course. There is an excellent historical account of the races, and despite the necessary technical verbiage, the account is highly interesting and entertaining. There is a complete table of statistics.

Typographically the book is all that could be asked for: it has that very decided merit of being well done but not over-done. It is set in leaded Caslon type, and it is amply illustrated with good reproductions, in the aquatone process, of horses, portions of the course, and old prints. There is, too, a map of the Aintree course. There is a complete index. The binding is in cloth, with paper label, and a blind stamp of whip, crop, and jockey cap. In all the difficult details of a well-handled book, this one is attractive and successful.

R.

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..... the man behind THE TIMID SOUL

Among H. T. Webster's fans—a loyal legion that embraces most of *Who's Who* and practically all *The Hall of Fame*, including SINCLAIR LEWIS, F. P. A., GEORGE JEAN NATHAN, ED. HOWE, GEORGE A. DORSEY, RAY LONG, RING LARDNER, CHARLES G. NORRIS, and CHARLES A. GIBSON—are doubtless many jellyfish who are too diffident to offer him Bright Ideas for *Timid Soul* situations worthy of a place on his drawing-board.

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The publishers guarantee that all entries will receive the respectful and earnest consideration of The Old Master. Moreover, the author of the best suggestion received within the next fortnight will be rewarded with five autographed first-edition copies of *The Timid Soul* book—120 full-page illustrations, RING LARDNER introduction and all—plus the assurance that the most puissant ideas will actually be executed by WEBSTER himself and reproduced—with the winners' names—in the next edition of the book.

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THE most original book that we have read for a long time is *John Collier's* "His Monkey Wife, or Married to a Chimp." In fact, it is wholly delightful. We first heard of its merit from *Mitchell Kennerley* and we recently received a copy of the American edition from D. Appleton. The style of the book is masterly, its fantastic central idea beautifully carried out, its humor pervasive and shining, the character of Emily one to be added to the great heroines of fiction as a pattern of high-minded devotion. . . .

Every once in a while one happens upon a volume a few pages of which make one suddenly exclaim, "Why this person can write!" so thick and turbid is the flood of books that are mere mechanical contraptions, mere facile claptrap of the day. *John Collier can write*. With his tongue in his cheek he can assemble the most delicious sentences and paragraphs and his staid ridiculousness, his smooth mixture of tender sagacity with comedy of the purest quality, his persuasive fancy which takes full advantage of every opportunity of his beautifully satiric theme without a single stumble—these are notable gifts. . . .

By the side of such a book as this the latest light novel by *Michael Arlen*, "Men Dislike Women" (Doubleday, Doran), seems the sort of thing almost anyone could write, in a week or two. Not that Michael Arlen's hand is not practiced, not that his American types are not recognizable, or his story at times engaging. The Great Neck croquet crowd is, indeed, all too familiar. There is a great deal of talk that is a good deal of twaddle. The mind is rapidly filled with fluff by this sort of thing. It is hammock-reading without the hilariousness of *P. G. Wodehouse*. But Mr. Collier's book happens to be literature. . . .

But then we haven't really quite done justice to Mr. Arlen. The latter part of his book, with its Pete Fox, the ex-Mayor, and its lawless Charlie MacRae, finally tightens into quite a good crisis and a rather crackling ending. The trouble is that at that game Mr. Arlen challenges comparison with, for instance, *Scott Fitzgerald's* handling of "The Great Gatsby," and is nowhere beside that masterpiece. . . .

Harper has made a distinguished looking book of *Romain Rolland's* "Goethe and Beethoven." The many full-page sepia plates truly embellish it. *G. A. Pfister* and *E. S. Kemp* have made the translation. It is hardly necessary to say that M. Rolland's analysis is of importance, as it was in "Beethoven the Creator." . . .

If you read *Bill Seabrook's* "The Magic Island," you will remember what he has to say toward the end of it of *Wirkus* the U. S. Marine who became *King Faustin II* of the island of La Gonave off Haiti. Now comes the full story of this sergeant of Marines on a voodoo island, written by *Faustin Wirkus* himself with the help of *Taney Dudley*. It is one of the books in which truth is rather stranger than fiction, one of the great strange stories of the modern world. It is published by Doubleday, Doran. . . .

We congratulate Farrar & Rinehart upon the acquisition of *Ogden Nash* who this month becomes their Associate Editor. Mr. Nash will still write for *The New Yorker* from time to time. . . .

Vicki Baum, author of "Grand Hotel," will arrive in New York about the first of May en route to Hollywood. . . .

We owe an apology both to *Edmund Wilson* and to *Scribner's* because we spoke of Wilson's volume of criticism for which we cherish a high regard as "Axel's Garden," when it should have been "Axel's Castle." How we came to write "Garden" we don't understand. Mr. Weber of Scribner's reports, however, that two of the most favorably noticed books on the Scribner list have been confused by correspondents as "This Our Axel," and "Exile's Castle," so we don't feel quite so badly! . . .

An interesting new book we hear about is a new novel by *Dorothy Speare*, called "Shadow Man," which Houghton Mifflin will bring out early in 1932. Having played leading rôles in a score of European opera houses, and done much opera and concert work, Miss Speare has also written four novels and has now announced her retirement from the stage in order to devote her whole attention to writing. And this month Scribner's will publish a new volume of poems by *Max Eastman*, "Kinds of Love." In this book Mr. Eastman will also include all the best poems he cares to preserve from former books. . . .

Speaking as we were just above of the versatile and successful *Ogden Nash*, R. B. S. has finally been unable to resist the temptation to burst into song as below. This is the only imitation Nash we shall print, but—

Dear Phoenixian:

I think I must be having a premonition
As I sit here in the new Livonia
(Narrow-mindedly furnished with scores of
ash-trays, but never a single spitonia),
For I brood with a sensation passionate
Over this menace positively Nashional.
Now isn't it really a very considerable
menace

That all the scribblers who use 'em are
reaching for their fountain penace
To try this new fashing?

Can't you hear millions of typewriter teeth
Nashing?

Oh, Ogden, what a rash thing you do of it,
Letting your succulent lines allure in no less
than two places simultaneously in one
week's Sat. Review of Lit!

And yet it's not folloi

For you to feel sure you can keep ahead
of hoi polloi:

Surely the man who can rhyme "calliope
. . . diopé"

Will always be unanimously awarded the
first prize platter of tenderly fried
triope. . . .

And speaking as we were of Farrar & Rinehart, they have brought off a clever stunt in bringing out "Gin and Bitters," by *A. Riposte*, "a Novel about a Novelist who writes Novels about other Novelists." It is obvious that the author's name is a pseudonym.

THE PHOENICIAN.

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To readers of THE SATURDAY REVIEW:

Both Mr. Canby and Mr. Morley have mentioned in these pages recently a new book entitled *JUAN IN AMERICA*, by Eric Linklater. That book has just been published and you should rush out and buy a copy (\$2.50). A cable just received from England says that it is a howling success there. Read it and and you'll see why.

J. C. & H. S.