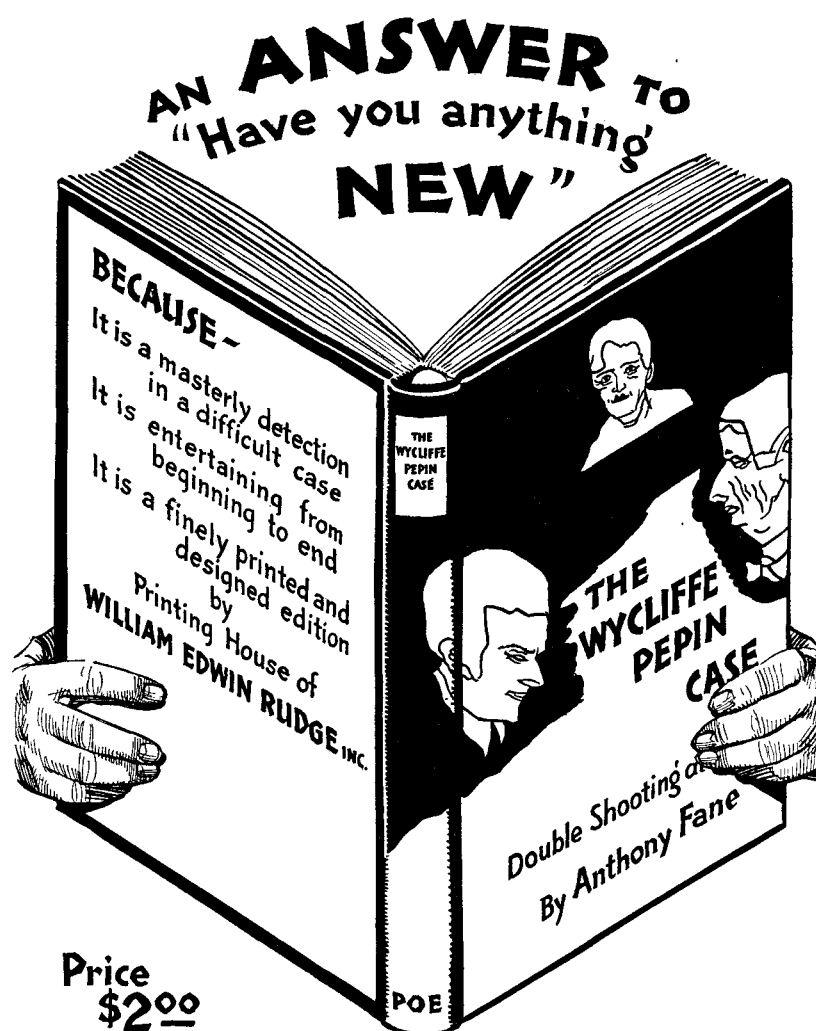


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The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received.

Fiction

THE DESTROYER. By ERNEST POOLE. Macmillan. 1931. \$2.

Mr. Poole is angry; he views with alarm, and his sensibilities are thoroughly offended. The broad outlines of his attack are indicated, on the last page of his novel, in the thoughts of one of his characters: "He was bitter against . . . the bunk and the hypocrisy, the greed for money, boost and boom, the lusts, the graft, the violence, and all the crass stupidities, which make up so large a part of the life of our country nowadays." The novel is fabricated for the sole purpose of elaborating this dissatisfaction, and the destroyer of the title is evidently this spirit of "boost and boom." Young Jack Wyckoff was destroyed, and with him went the happiness and the ideals of his father and mother. Mr. Poole implies that there are many Jack Wyckoffs in the land—sensitive idealists with whom the times are always out of step, and whom the times in the end destroy. Whose is the fault? Mr. Poole has no shadow of doubt.

Many intelligent citizens take much of this indictment against our United States for granted. They assume it to be matter of common belief that our social and economic structures are often silly, crude, or downright wrong. If any statement of grief and anger at things in general is to be effective, it must be organized with vigor and accuracy, to say nothing of skill. In hardly any other kind of novel does the not quite first-rate fail so dismally as in this. Mr. Poole is entirely out of the running; he is vague, petulant, flaccid. His novel has no quality that impels us to take seriously his woe-unto-ye-miserable-sinners. And lacking that force, it becomes merely annoying, the fretfulness of a sick child.

Has the Ernest Poole of "The Harbor" quite vanished? That fine tale, published many years ago, stands clearly in our memory for its vigor and honesty.

TURNABOUT. By THORNE SMITH. Doubleday, Doran. 1931. \$2.

The reader who intends to grapple with Thorne Smith's new novel must be prepared to toss to one side all consideration of the probabilities as well as all prejudices about the conventions, for this is a light-hearted and irresponsible extravaganza, in which much happens that couldn't and the characters do and say everything they shouldn't.

It is a pity that the publishers have taken occasion to announce "Turnabout" on the wrapper as a book "which Anatole France might have signed," for, of course, Anatole France's distinguishing mark was wit, and there is no wit in "Turnabout." But though it has no wit, it shows flashes of irony, and contains plenty of knock-about, none-too-delicately-seasoned fun, of the type which used to keep the audiences of the old, unreformed music-hall stage in roars of laughter.

The motivation—a sudden mutual change of sex between a man and his wife through the magic powers of an Egyptian statuette—is obviously one which opens the door to any amount of comic indecorum, and it cannot be said that the author has missed very many of her opportunities. The background is a prosperous commuter community near New York. Tim Willows, an advertising man, and his wife, Sally, live in perpetual disagreement and envy of each other's lot. After a particularly riotous gin-party, things come to a climax, and little Mr. Ram, their household god, indignant at their everlasting bickerings, gets to work with his ancient Egyptian spells.

The resulting interchange of personalities, as in Anstey's "Vice Versa," proves deplorably unpleasant for both parties, and especially for Tim, when he discovers that, in his wife's body, he is going to have a baby. From this point on, the humor becomes increasingly obstetrical, and finally culminates in a slapstick scene in a maternity hospital, after which the Willows resume their own bodies.

The author has a keen eye for the ridiculous and the pretentious in our modern social institutions, such as advertising agencies, church suppers, and magistrates' courts, and displays a primitive zest in making them primitively ridiculous.

Parts of the book really are hilariously funny, if the reader does not mind

the anatomical and lavatory implications, while the portrait of "Dopey," the ungainly hound, is a delightful dog study. On the whole, it is pretty safe to predict that this is not one of the volumes which Mr. Sumner will list among the "Hundred Best Books."

SPECIAL HUNGER. By GEORGE O'NEIL. Liveright. 1931. \$2.50.

This is a novelized life of John Keats. The novelized biography is a hybrid form which must always stand on its defence: if its author has avoided the pains, and lost the guarantee of authenticity, of the true biography, he can justify himself only by producing a good novel. Mr. O'Neil has not done this. It is a pity, but it was almost unavoidable, from the nature of his subject. There are figures whose lives are so eventful, or so psychologically interesting (like Shelley), or even so mysterious, that they lend themselves to a free treatment and have in them a good story; but Keats's life was marked by little except cramped circumstances and one unhappy and one-sided love affair, and the unfolding of his mind appears to have been, for a poet, unusually straightforward. He does not seem promising material for a novel, as distinct from a biography.

At all events, Mr. O'Neil has not succeeded in getting a novel out of him. The successive incidents of his life are there, the publication of this book and that, meetings with various people, extracts from the quarterly reviews, but nothing of the essential Keats, nothing to show why

(Continued on page 357)

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**THE LOVE
OF MARIO
FERRARO**

By JOHN FABRICIUS

SIMON & SCHUSTER Publishers

The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the choice of books should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, c/o *The Saturday Review*. As for reasons of space ninety percent of the inquiries received cannot be answered in print, a stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed for reply.

L. M., Mexico City, Mex., asks for books on mechanics and technique of magazine publishing, editorial work, and editing for magazines. The letter specified a fairly long list of points on which enlightenment was desired in matters of technique, and they were all attended to by Greer's "Advertising and Its Mechanical Production," a large and truly valuable work published by Crowell. This book is of course meant specially for the practical advertising man, but what it has to say about processes and methods, whether of lay-out or typographical details, or Ben Day, or offset, or any of the matters about which printers and publishers concern themselves, is likely to be a lifesaver to a beginner. "Journalistic Vocations," by C. E. Rogers (Appleton), tells what sort of work is expected of every sort of brain-worker connected with a newspaper or magazine, or employed in sidelines such as publicity. I turned first, of course, to the duties of a literary editor and found them faithfully enumerated; then I looked for those of the associate editor and found that they were to do what the literary editor is supposed to do, so I knew the author had the right professional slant. This is a book for anyone looking to see where he can get a foothold in the profession. "Magazine Article Writing," by Brennecke and Clark (Macmillan), and "Writing for Profit," by Donald Wilhelm (McGraw-Hill), are practical manuals for writers; the latter covers more ground, the former goes more into details; another good book is "Chats on Feature Writing," by H. F. Harrington (Harper). "Problems of Newspaper Publishing," by Buford Brown (Harper), is especially for weekly and daily newspapers outside large cities; it deals with financing, promotion, circulation, and other business problems, and includes enough law to keep an editor on

the safe side of trouble such as libel suits. On the historical side two books are especially interesting; F. A. Mumby's "Publishing and Bookselling" (Bowker), a huge history from earliest times to modern English firms and houses, and Frank Presbrey's "History and Development of Advertising" (Doubleday, Doran).

P. J. M., Notre Dame, Indiana, asks if there has appeared any book in English about German or French Catholic literature, or articles in magazines about this subject. The Catholic Book Club, to which I applied for information, says that there is not much literature on this subject. In Katharine Gregy's "Poets and Pilgrims" there is one essay, and George Shuster has had three essays on that subject in the *Bookman* during the last year. There is also information to be found in articles which have appeared in various issues of the *Commonweal*, the *Catholic World*, and the two foreign publications, *Studies* and the *Month*. In the first issues of *America* there were articles on French Catholic literature.

C. A., Knoxville, Tenn., asks if there is a dictionary and grammar, or combination of the two, to help in the reading of Latin, both classical and medieval. "I am familiar with the modern romance languages, particularly Spanish and French and have studied Latin four years in high school." Anne S. Pratt of the Yale University Library, to which I referred this call, suggests that the reader secure some such book as Edwin Post's "Latin at Sight" (Ginn) which has footnotes with explanations, and after reading this read the "Loeb Classics" which have the English opposite the Latin, making a very interesting way to read Latin. There is no combined dictionary and grammar: the standard

works are the Latin grammars of Bennett, Allen and Greenough, and Gildersleeve; "Harper's Dictionary" edited by Lewis and Short, and Lewis's "Elementary Latin Dictionary." It may be possible to approach the subject by using Collar and Daniell's "First Year Latin" and after a brief survey of this proceed to the classical authors in Loeb. A very elementary book for reading Latin would be H. C. Nutting's "Ad Alpes," a tale of Roman life (Scott Foresman), which has vocabulary and footnotes; it is juvenile but makes an easy approach to more difficult Latin.

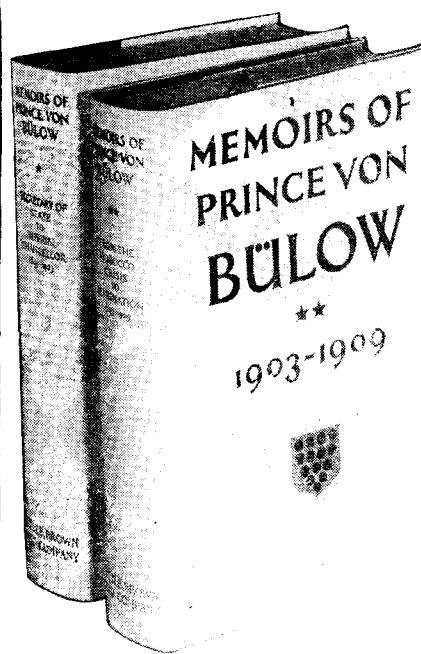
Selections in books for the study of medieval Latin would be more interesting, as such books are more from the point of view of the advanced student. The following books are considered interesting: "An Anthology of Medieval Latin," by Stephen Gaselee (Macmillan, London, 1925); this has no vocabulary and neither has Karl P. Harrington's "Medieval Latin" (Allyn and Bacon); C. S. Beeson's "Primer of Medieval Latin" (Scott Foresman) has a vocabulary.

Add to the list of American novel-poems the new one by Eda Lou Walton, recently published by Brewer & Warren, "Jane Matthew." A California correspondent tells me to include in the list of books to be used in a study course in the English essay one I had suggested in earlier lists but overlooked this time: "Century Readings in the English Essay," by Louis Wann (Century), which has an introductory essay on "The Development of the Essay in English."

H. L. H., Indianapolis, Ind., is looking for a lost book about crafts in the Southern Appalachians, recently published, whose title and author are not known to him. This is clearly "Mountain Homespun," by Frances Louisa Goodrich (Yale University Press), who brought about a revival of mountain handicraft in North Carolina and wrote a book about it that has been enthusiastically brought to my attention by several readers in cities far apart. M. D. L., Yonkers, N. Y., tells H. T. who wanted to know about the Youth Movement in Germany, to consult a series of six articles by Ruth

Siegel appearing within the month in the *New York Evening Post*. D. R., New York, wishes to find a book listed somewhere between January 1930 and last May, in which words grouped by subject (about 20,000 altogether) showed the Greek roots for each word. I have no record of this, but a persistent conviction that I have seen such a work; I hope someone can identify it. It has long been a pastime of Greek professors—who nowadays have time on their hands—to prove by some such means what would happen to the arts and sciences if Greek roots were suddenly routed out.

E. E. L., Cleveland, O., an expert, puts the finishing touch to the Dalmatian list. Here, she says, are the really classic books, beginning with T. G. Jackson's "Dalmatia, the Quarnero and Istra" (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1887, 3 vols.) The writer was a distinguished architect and the architectural interest is first in his books, but they are thoroughly pleasing merely as travel. The best single book on Dalmatia is F. Hamilton Jackson's "The Shores of the Adriatic: the Austrian side; the Kustenlande, Istria, and Dalmatia" (Dutton, 1908) which has many illustrations. The best guidebooks are Luigi Villari's "Ragusa," and the "Handbook of Dalmatia" of Hartleben, published in Vienna and Leipzig, with Maude M. Holbach's "Dalmatia" (Lane, London, 1910), accurate and thoroughly pleasing, more popular and less full than the "classics" listed above. Then there is Lester G. Hornby's "Balkan Sketches" (Little, Brown), sketches and descriptions by an artist, more than half of the book devoted to Dalmatia, the rest to Bosnia, especially Sarajevo, where travellers are almost sure to go if they once get to Dubrovnik. *Jugoslavija*, the monthly publication of the Yugoslav Tourist Society "Putnik" (The Pilgrim), is published in Split, Yugoslavia. This journal has a wealth of beautiful illustrations in every number, designed most successfully to enlist the interest of tourists. Each number has a descriptive article in English, several in German, and occasional ones in other languages, and the advertisements form a guide in themselves.



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