

The Reader's Guide

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*

L. H. C., Staunton, Va., asks for books on the history and evolution of the observance of Lent, particularly in the Anglican and American churches.

THE best I could find was in the article in the latest *Britannica*, "Lent," most of the many sermons printed on the subject being meant for aids to devotion rather than historical surveys. Referring the matter to the Librarian of Union Theological Seminary, Mr. W. W. Rockwell agreed that this was the best encyclopedia hint. He added that the history of Lent in the early period may be found in the "Dictionary of Christian Antiquities," by William Smith and Henry Wace, published some fifty years ago and still good, also in the article in the French "Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie," under "Carême." The only books on the subject are by Roman Catholics: "Lent and Holy Week," by Herbert Thurston, S. J. (Longmans, Green) and "Heortology: a History of the Christian Festivals from Their Origin to the Present Day," by Dr. K. A. Heinrich Kellner, Professor of Catholic Theology in the University of Bonn (Kegan Paul).

J. F. M., London, says that "one of the bees in my bonnet is wrath with the way in which Switzerland's best work in art and letters is either ignored or credited to France or Germany. I wonder how many people realize that Rousseau was a Swiss, not a Frenchman? Even the *Encyclopedia Britannica* described Gottfried Keller as a German novelist, though—thank goodness—this and other Swiss defects have been rectified in the new edition. This is why I venture to point out that Keller's charming collection of tales, which can hardly be overpraised, is the "people of Seldwyla," not of Selwylde, as the *Saturday Review* prints it. A mistake of this kind could hardly be made in the title of a French or German classic; why should poor little Switzerland be treated so carelessly? Oh, couldn't it just? I have yet to find the mistake in any language that could not be made in a composing room. As for a French composing room, someday a French compositor will spell an American writer's name quite right and perish from shock.

NAMES have begun to come in for the New England lakeside lodge of M. R. P., Detroit. It so tickled the fancy of E. B. G. A., Albuquerque, for a resident of New Mexico to get the chance of suggesting to a man in Michigan a name for his lodge in Maine, that she sent in "Long-Last-Lodge," adding that L.L.L. would look well on the china. But she hopes that M. R. P. will "accept your charming suggestion of 'Hetherward.'" E. T. L., New York, says that "Bird House" served for a lifetime to identify the Massachusetts cottage from which her family took wing. M. B., Opelika, Alabama, says that there are two lovely names in Kipling's "The Feet of the Young Men"

*The Young men's feet are turning
To the camps of proved desire and
known delight*

and that his "Four-way Lodge" is attractive, if it suits this building. So is "Poco Pensieri," old Italian for "little care," and Lancelot's "Joyeuse Garde." "If the lake is beautifully clear, the Indian Catawissa—clear water—might suit, or O-kee-cho—all hail. If there is an extensive waterscape, the Greek Thalassa is expressive. My place was granted by the government to an old chief, so all the names, Lake Shohola, the brooks, and the mountains are Indian, one mountain bearing the name of the chief himself."

L. R., Sidney, Ohio, needs at least one book on how to write for the magazines.

THE latest are "Magazine Article Writing," by Ernest Brennecke, Jr., and Donald Clark (Macmillan), and "Writing for Profit," by Donald Wilhelm (McGraw-Hill), both published recently. The first deals with every sort of article, features, "confessions," interviews, book reviews, and essays; by plain, direct, and practical chunks of advice it helps a beginner from gathering material to marketing the finished product, and the brief book lists are made up of helpful working material for a writer's desk library. Mr. Wilhelm's book begins with a chapter on newspaper work such as I wish someone had written for me when I was plunging into journalism at eighteen on a small town opposition daily. But then, the veterans on that paper, with the matter-

of-fact benevolence of their tribe, taught me such rudiments of my trade as I ever mastered, without any textbook at all. From this section "Writing for Profit" runs into magazine articles, interviewing, publicity, advertising, and radio writing; it even deals with fiction, to my mind far less usefully—but then I seldom enjoy professional advice on the trade of fiction. A feature is inclusion of advice by famous writers and editors, scattered freely through the book; here is a famous set of suggestions for writers of special articles sent out by the late Dr. E. E. Slosson of *Science Service*, which would as much improve papers for women's clubs as it has bettered everyday articles on popular science.

E. C. D., Hinsdale, Ill., asks, on behalf of a teacher, for reading material that would stimulate interest in her two particularly dogmatic subjects, spelling and arithmetic.

FOR the first subject I have had an answer ready and waiting since just before Christmas, when a copy of the pamphlet "Learning to Spell: an Informal Guide for College Students," by Julia Norton McCorkle (Heath), drifted to my desk and made some sensation, first by its subtitle, then by its courageous tackling of the notion that spelling is a gift of God withheld or bestowed without human collaboration. Spelling well or ill in the 'teens is largely a matter of pride; thus spurred, the young person forces himself into training, and this little book provides him with technique and material for it.

"Practical Mathematics for Home Study," by C. I. Palmer (McGraw-Hill), is a one volume edition of the same author's "Practical Mathematics" in four: it covers arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry, with special reference to use in self-instruction. "Shop Mathematics," by Norris and Smith (McGraw-Hill), is a standard textbook teaching fundamental principles for use in shop courses and continuation schools; "Business Arithmetic," by Sutton and Lennes (Allyn), a similar work for business schools. My connection with the anti-mathematics movement being too well known for my recommendation to do these books any good, they have been chosen on the advice of better authorities. I would welcome further suggestions on books for this purpose; possibly arithmetic could be brightened as Latin grammar was by the famous "Comic Latin Grammar" of Percival Leigh of *Punch*, with John Leech's illustrations—a work just reprinted with all its original pictures and eccentricities, by Edwin Valentine Mitchell and Dodd, Mead. Similar attention has just been paid to English history in a work called "1066 and All That," by W. C. Sellar and R. J. Yeatman (Methuen) by whose bestowal a British correspondent has just tried to improve my mind: it is "the only memorable history of England, because all the history that you can remember is in this book." Here one may read of Richard I who, "whenever he returned to England, always set out again immediately for the Mediterranean and was therefore known as Richard Gare de Lyon," and of the Edward who said *Honi soit qui mal y pense* ("Honey, your silk stocking's hanging down") and "gave his ill-mannered courtiers the Order of the Bath—an extreme form of torture in the Middle Ages." Not that this has anything to do with arithmetic, but such a light-hearted book on it might help to lift the curse.

J. A. T., Oklahoma, asks who is Elspeth, author of "Strange Truth," published by Houghton Mifflin, saying: "I have an impression she is Dorothy Parker but have no announcement."

ELSPETH is really Mrs. Elspeth MacDuffie O'Halloran of Springfield, Mass. She has had a good deal of experience in publishing and bookselling and has recently gone into department store advertising; she is now living and working in Baltimore. Dale Warren of Houghton Mifflin says that the *New York Times* review of "Strange Truth" said that it was written by Dorothy Parker under a *nom de plume*, and that is where all the trouble started in the beginning.

I. B. C., Montrose, N. Y., a valued upholder of this column, is starting another Sabbathical in Europe in May and means to do all that good-will can to understand and admire the extraordinary new things to be seen while abroad in painting and sculpture.

"We did go to a modern exhibition in Rome in 1925, but I should like this time to know more about it beforehand." They find Suzanne La Follette's "Art in America" very readable, "but simply cannot swallow some of the illustrations as portraits."

A NUMBER of readers may choke on some of the pictures in the following books, but for all that they will help this reader to realize the hope that "I can see the charm of modern paintings by the time I return. I love Italian Primitives—I wonder if people of their own day did so!" "The Modern Movement in Art," by R. H. Wilemski (Stokes), which explains what the new schools are trying to do, with illustrations at every point and comparisons with old masters, makes a valuable work. "The Meaning of Art," by A. P. McMahon (Norton), is another for this list, and Walter Pach's "Masters of Modern Art" (Viking), and the provocative volume on "Modern American Painting," by Samuel M. Kootz (Brewer & Warren), with Oliver Saylor's "Revolt in the Arts" (Brentano). A group of four handbooks on "The Modern Arts" (Norton) come together in a box. For modernistic sculpture, the works of Stanley Casson, beautifully illustrated: "Some Modern Sculptors" (Oxford), and "Twentieth Century Sculpture" (Oxford). By no means omit "The Frescoes of Diego Ribera," with an introduction by Ernestine Evans, published in a big book by Harcourt, Brace; another illuminating work on Mexican art in general is Anita Brenner's "Idols Behind Altars" (Brewer & Warren). To these I would add, for there is no separating them from this consideration, "Caricature of To-day," published by A. and C. Boni, and Frederick Kiesler's "Contemporary Art Applied to the Store and Its Display" (Brentano), the latter a large picture book of the extreme modernistic movement. Applied to room decoration, this seems to combine the best features of a shop window, a bathroom, and a safety-deposit vault.



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Points of View

Information Wanted

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

I wonder if you could possibly offer any suggestions as to how I could find a "lost" story. It is rather an absurd quest, for none of us remembers either the author's name or the title of the tale, or even the date of publication. It came out at least six years ago, and we think it was seen in a volume belonging to a set of famous short stories—the sort of collection one finds in remote corners of the world. The volume in question was picked up in Siam.

The story is laid in China—Pekin, I think—presumably during the Boxer rising. A little group of people, of different nationalities, is besieged by the rebels. A rescuing party fights its way up to the very gates of the compound, only to be driven back. An old scientist, who has lived long years in China, knows full well what dreadful fate awaits them if captured by the Chinese, and feels the situation is hopeless. The ammunition is exhausted, the food supply very low, and the end seems inevitable. With mock gaiety he arranges a last dinner party, at which he poisons the wine. There is some difficulty in making one or two of the women drink, but finally he is successful. The rescuers break through, and arrive just as the last person is dying.

This is the story in briefest form. We have found various people who claim to have read it, but who cannot help us find it. I have tried the libraries here with no success.

If you could give me some clue, or some idea how to proceed in locating it (with such scant information), I should be most grateful.

We are not searching in idle curiosity, but with a definite object in view.

MRS. KERMIT ROOSEVELT.

New York City.

Some Confessions

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

In the issue of December 27 Professor Northrop performs a useful service in showing the latent Platonism of the school of scientific philosophy he refers to; but in doing so introduces several confusions of his own. To be brief, I shall be somewhat bald:

1) Professor Northrop confuses the Aristotelian philosophy of nature with the atomic, and shows it by referring to the two as a single alternative to Platonism in Catholic philosophy. I grant that he does not make the confusion a clear one, for at the beginning he seems to distinguish three separate views. The two are of course quite distinct; Aristotle attacks atomism in well-known passages of the *"Metaphysics"*; Galileo had to struggle hard against the Peripatetics, and so did Gassendi.

2) Professor Northrop wrongly calls atomism (which by the by is not essential to scientific philosophy in general nor to modern scientific philosophy in particular) a philosophy of the visible. The atoms are ideal entities, by definition invisible, and are inferred from their visible effects, just as the entities which the Platonic current asserts. If the division must be a dichotomy, atomism belongs with Platonism rather than on the side of Aristotle. The connection is well known between Greek atomism and the Eleatics (Parmenides's Being; a less well known instance is Melissos's *kosmos*).

HENRY F. MINS, JR.

New York.

Catiline or Cataline?

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

A question in bibliography.

Henrik Ibsen's first youthful play was entitled *"Catilina"*; Ibsen made the fourth letter an *i*, as everybody does, and he naturally did not Anglicize or Gallicize by turning the Latin final *a* to an *e*. No complete English translation of the play has been made so far as I am informed; but in 1878 Mr. A. Johnstone published a translation of the first act with a summary of the other acts. In his title he legitimately Anglicized the name by using the final *e*, and he (or his printer?) eccentrically made the fourth letter an *a*, *"Cataline."*

Now the new *"Britannica"* gives *"Cataline"* as the English form of Ibsen's title, and others who depend on the *"Britannica"* begin to say that Ibsen's first play was *"Cataline."*

Is this the line standardization is going to take? When a Norwegian writes a play in the Danish language with correct spelling of the title, and the first English translation (incomplete at that) misspells the title contrary to universal English as well as international usage, does the misspelling thereby become the standard English form for use when one is referring to the original Danish work, "1850 saw the publication of his first play, *'Cataline'*"? If the *"Britannica"* is the correct standard, and if somebody should now publish a complete translation of the play and spell *Catiline's* name right, would the *"Britannica"* thereby be changed from right to wrong? When we speak in English of a work in a foreign language, and elect to use the Anglicized form of the title, why should we not use the ordinary Anglicization of the word which constitutes the title and disregard any aberrant Anglicization which anybody else may have made, unless the aberrant form has become familiar to the general public?

STEVEN T. BYINGTON.

Ballard Vale, Mass.

Kin Hubbard

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

In *"Kin"* Hubbard, who died the other day in Indianapolis after working since 1891 on the *News* of that city, America has lost one of her finest humorists. His delightful series of *"Abe Martin's Sayings"* deserved to be much more widely known. Only last summer E. V. Lucas, editing the first English appearance of *"Abe Martin's Wisecracks,"* said, "Few are quite so terse and trenchant and amusing as Mr. Hubbard. He may not have any illusions, but he is profoundly understanding and always on the side of the angels. Furthermore, he makes you laugh." An example or two is in order:

"It's jest about got so a doctor a day is cheaper'n apples."

"Makin' a long stay short is a good aid t' popularity."

"'Woman's work is never done'—any more."

CYRIL CLEMENS.

Webster Groves, Mo.

Mrs. Opie

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

I am making a study of Mrs. Amelia Alderson Opie (1769-1853), novelist and poet, and wife of the artist John Opie. I am anxious to locate any manuscript material, particularly the letters, journals, and diaries of Mrs. Opie's which Miss Cecilia L. Brightwell used as a basis of her *"Memoirs"* (1854); and the unpublished novel, *"The Painter and his Wife."* I wish also to find a copy of Mrs. Opie's *"The Dangers of Coquetry,"* published anonymously in London in 1790. I am interested, too, in information concerning portraits of Mrs. Opie. I shall greatly appreciate any assistance which may come to me through your columns.

MARGARET ELIOT MACGREGOR.

2 Bedford Place, London, W. C. 1, Eng.

Josh Billings

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

I am writing a biography of Josh Billings [Henry Wheeler Shaw]. If any of your readers have letters or other information about the humorist will they please communicate with me? CYRIL CLEMENS.

A Failure of Memory

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

In Mr. Morley's preface to the Memorial Edition of *Sherlock Holmes*, he refers to an uncertainty on the part of Dr. Watson as to where he had been wounded—I believe that there is also some variance as to the good doctor's Christian name—but more extraordinary by far:

Compare pages 38-41 of the *"Cardboard Box"* with pages 162-164 of the *"Resident Patient."* For three pages the two stories are identical. Henry Ward Beecher, war, etc. I suppose it is a case of a writer finding some old memoranda, and failing to remember that he had used the matter before. Three pages are reproduced verbatim.

If this has not been noticed, this information may be of interest.

CHARLES MASON.

Versailles, Ky.

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