

The BOWLING GREEN

The Folder

I SHOULD not like the University of Oklahoma to think that the Bowling Green has not noticed the fine work it is doing. The purpose of this turf, if any, is to keep a little space open for things not too easily noticeable. Usually, being slow and lethargic, it takes us quite a while to get a focus on what really matters. Two years ago we were thrilled by a reprint of *The Spirit of Learning in a Motor Age*, a fine address given by President W. B. Bizzell at the opening of the university's autumn session, September 17, 1929. (I wish a lot of other college presidents would read it and pass it on to their students.) Now I find, in the University of Oklahoma's valuable quarterly *Books Abroad*, edited by Roy Temple House, an interesting little article on Rainer Maria Rilke.

I am not under any misapprehension about Rilke. *The Journal of My Other Self*, published a year ago by W. W. Norton, is "full of many special things that are meant for oneself alone and may not be spoken." But for a few readers it is of deep importance. Perhaps the University of Oklahoma is doing more than New York literary critics are to keep alive an extraordinary book.

A welcome surprise for dabblers in the 17th century is that John Collier, the witty author of *His Monkey Wife*, has published (D. Appleton, \$2.50) a selected volume of John Aubrey. Of course it cannot displace the complete two volumes edited by Andrew Clark (Oxford Press, 1898) which is one of the few works in which we have written our private badge of homage *Ex Libris Carissimis*. But that edition is not likely to be discovered except by specializing scholars. In *The Scandal and Credulities of John Aubrey* Mr. Collier has chosen the liveliest of those immortal sketches of 17th century characters. With one chief exception—the omission of Aubrey's notes on Thomas Hobbes—Collier has managed to include, in one inexpensive volume, the most spirited of this table-chat. Aubrey's lovers will always be relatively few, and they will necessarily be readers of a strong stomach, not offended by Jacobite tastes in frolic. Lytton Strachey, you remember, (see his *Portraits in Miniature*) is an Aubrey man. The Bowling Green has been mentioning Aubrey every now and then for the past ten years. Now for the first time Mr. Collier's edition makes it possible for you to decide whether we deceived you.

I learned with regret, from a chance item in the *London Times Literary Supplement*, that John Bailey is dead. I knew his work only in three little books, admirable in their kind. The first was *Dr. Johnson and His Circle*, which I bought at Oxford in 1913. The second was *Walt Whitman*, published in the "English Men of Letters" (which would have amused Walt) in 1926. Macmillans sent me advance sheets of the book before publication; I liked it so well that I had it bound for myself. The third was *Shakespeare*, the first volume (1930) of Longmans, Green's "The English Heritage" series. The note I saw in the *Times* stated only that Mr. Bailey's essays on Jane Austen are shortly to be published by the Oxford University Press. Of Mr. Bailey's career and affiliations I know nothing, but the wise, temperate and graciously written little books I have mentioned must have won him many friends.

The monthly pamphlet issued from Goodspeed's Book Shop in Boston has established itself in my affection as always good to steal from. Its editor Mr. Norman L. Dodge has a way of turning up the sort of oddities that appeal to me. This month he reprints, from Ramelli's *Diverse et Artificiose Machine* (Paris, 1588) a delightful engraving. He thinks it may have been intended as a Proof-Reading Machine. My own idea is that it represents a device invented by some ingenious committee-member of a medieval Book of the Month Club. Or perhaps it is a laborious bibliographer, struggling to collate rival issues and conflicting points. I venture to reprint the picture here, with my customary obeisance to Goodspeed's.

Eugene Field, in *The Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac*, commented on one of the outstanding symp-

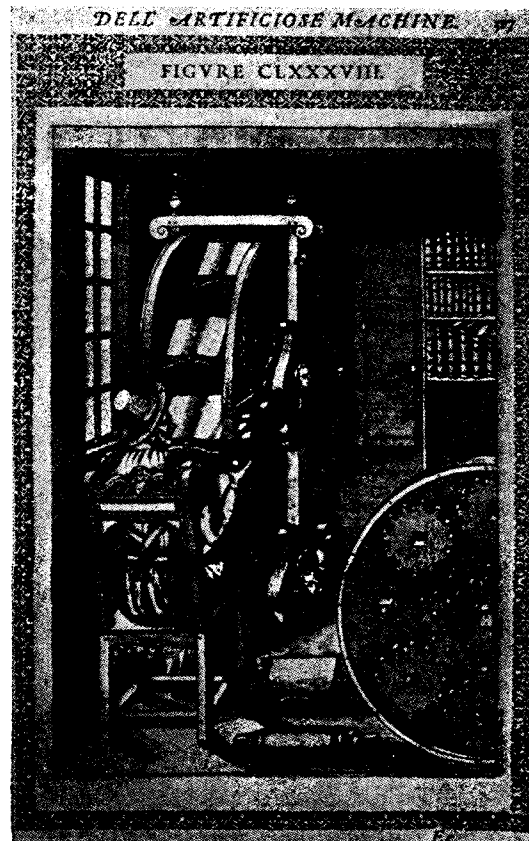
toms of "catalogitis," viz. that having riffled through the catalogue and marked interesting items, the victim of the disease thinks the books practically his already. Checking through the latest catalogue of Arthur Rogers, 4 Queen's Square, Newcastle-on-Tyne, the following were almost as good as on my shelves:—

Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 2nd edition, Boston 1853 (repaired), £2 6s.

Meredith, *Diana of the Crossways*, 1st edition, 3 vols., 1885, belonged to Meredith's son, W. M. Meredith, £10.

Trollope, *Orley Farm*, 1st edition, 2 vols., 1862, £3.

E. C. Bentley, *Trent's Last Case*, 1st edition, £2 2s—of which Mr. Rogers says "this classic which ranks with *The Moonstone* as one of the two best detective novels in the language." That praise I think is a little too strong. Probably *The Woman in White* is the other one of the two. *Trent's Last Case* is an admirable tale, but there are a number



A PROOF-READING MACHINE

of other contenders—and we're speaking of novels, not short stories. How about *A Study in Scarlet*; *The Red House Mystery*; *Seven Keys to Baldpate*; *No Other Tiger*; and some of the yarns of Eden Phillpotts, Marie Belloc Lowndes, Frances Noyes Hart, Rufus King, Agatha Christie, Dashiell Hammett? A very good time may be had, by the way, in Kenneth MacGowan's new collection called *Sleuths*, which gives glimpses of the 23 most famous detectives in fiction with delightful "biographical" memoranda on the sleuths themselves.

Gissing, *The Nether World*, 1st edition, 3 vols., 1889. £3 3s.

Such were the innocent and imaginary acquisitions enjoyed in Mr. Rogers' catalogue, at a cost of only about a hundred imaginary dollars.—But let no one misunderstand my allusions to such matters. When I mention items such as the above it is not necessarily because I have an insidious hankering for them myself; it is to give others the fun of chasing them.

MUZZLING DOWN

Bourbon whisky, the God-ordained basis of all orthodox juleps, is not even mentioned. Ignored entirely is the elemental fact that juleps never should be mixed in anything but metal—preferably silver. As crowning atrocity, the Professor recommends you suck the drink through a straw, thus eliminating its pristine and most delicious charm—that moment when, after muzzling down through the aromatic mint stems, you finally encounter the delectable draught at their far ends.

—FREDERICK F. VAN DE WATER, in the N. Y. *Evening Post*, in a review of a book on Drinks.

Speaking of booksellers' and publishers' pamphlets, another that we never miss is the *Rudge Rubric*, issued from 475 Fifth Avenue, New York. Its September issue reprints well-deserved tributes written in honor of the late William Edwin Rudge after his death last June. When good old John Aubrey, of *Brief Lives*, wanted to pay his highest compliment to a man he called him "ingeniose." We can truly call the anonymous editor of the *Rudge Rubric* ingeniose. He has an orb for all that is quicksilver and queer. He seems to be, in moments of excitement,

a singer. For he remarks, of Janet Dexter's copy of the Peale portrait of Francis Scott Key (300 copies for collectors, hand-colored by the artist, \$7.50) "One may now gayly reach for that high note with the official sanction of all Congress and President Hoover. The bill declaring the Star Spangled Banner our national anthem was signed March 4, 1931."

The editor of the *Rudge Rubric* is one of the most picturesque examples of Eugene Field's great hypothesis concerning the baldness of bibliophiles. Field maintained that the light of a reading lamp, beating down upon the bent skull of the student, parches and desiccates the follicle-bulbs.

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Apropos Lytton Strachey, what a good time he was having himself when he wrote—*Portraits in Miniature*, the sketch of Carlyle—the following sentence on the mid-Victorian age:—

... an age of barbarism and prudery, of nobility and cheapness, of satisfaction and desperation; an age in which everything was discovered and nothing known; an age in which all the outlines were tremendous and all the details sordid; when gas-jets struggled feebly through the circumambient fog, when the hour of dinner might be at any moment between two and six, when the doses of rhubarb were periodic and gigantic, when pet dogs threw themselves out of upper storey windows, when cooks reeled drunk in areas, when one sat for hours with one's feet in dirty straw dragged along the street by horses, when an antimacassar was on every chair, and the baths were minute tin circles, and the beds were full of bugs and disasters.

That particular vein of rhetoric, always delightful, was itself a mid-Victorian specialty; Macaulay was notably good at it. It is always a strong temptation for a witty pen, and the historians of 1960 will in the same way prove that ourselves of the 20's and 30's were dumb bunnies and clucks.

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I am particularly pleased to note the growing success of *Hatter's Castle*, a novel of prodigious power. It is melodramatic in the extreme, yet it carries the reader to the end. Many have expressed some incredulity about certain episodes in the story—e.g. the collapse of the Tay bridge when the train was crossing it. In answer to this, W. S. H. calls our attention to an item in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*:—"The first railway viaduct across the Firth (of Tay), opened in 1877, was blown down along with a train in 1879."

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There has been no earlier opportunity to thank a number of correspondents who very kindly informed us that the title (in Herman Melville's handwriting) which a client misread as *Laughcomic* should have been TAGHCONIC, a book about the Berkshire Hills by "Godfrey Greylock" (J. E. A. Smith), first issued in 1852, reprinted in 1879. A copy was sold recently by the excellent Housatonic Bookshop (Salisbury, Conn.) for \$3.50.

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Last year, just before Christmas and a little too late to be discovered by most of those who would have enjoyed it, there was published by our old friend and neighbor the Miller Music Company at 62 West 45 Street a very unusual book of songs and music for children. *Raggedy Ann's Sunny Songs* is the title; the verses and drawings (in color) are by Johnny Gruelle, whom you know as the creator of Raggedy Ann; the contagious music by Will Woodin—whose business is to manufacture locomotives and steel cars, which has given him by reaction an exquisitely dainty and humoresque touch on the piano-forte. Johnny Gruelle's verses are delightful, and Mr. Woodin's simple accompaniments—which never exceed two sharps or three flats—are not the kind of music parents think the children ought to enjoy; they are the kind of thing that once heard are engraved in the skull and which young people can't let alone, even when their indignant procreator is trying to write in the next room. A genuinely enjoyable book; more than a book, a ripple of sheer fun, it teaches us lessons about not being a crab. We only discovered it a few weeks ago, and we have hardly been able to get it away from the piano long enough to write this note about it. It is the Bowling Green's first memorandum for Christmas 1931. Booksellers take notice.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

BOOKS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Plays for the Young

THE SCHOOL DRAMA IN ENGLAND.
By T. H. VAIL MOTTER. New York:
Longmans, Green & Co. 1930. \$3.50.

Reviewed by ERIC S. DRAKE

THERE are two elements in historical studies of this nature, content and perspective; Mr. Motter has given us a book as excellent and scholarly in the one as it is rudimentary in the other, but though one cannot overlook its faults, it remains a book that no lover of drama in its full scope can afford to miss, and the reader will the better appreciate its value by realizing the limits within which these values hold.

The main thesis of the work, that there has been in England a vital connection between the drama of the schools and that of the theatres by way of the universities, is hardly epoch-making, but what is of interest is the wealth of detail with which the thesis is supported, even to the conditions under which the children lived and acted. Mr. Motter's documentary researches have taken him into the dim past, and the reader cannot realize these dramatic stirrings in the ancient English schools in pre-Renaissance days without a certain responsive thrill. From Winchester and Eton the story is followed through the major "public" schools to modern days, with one chapter on some of the lesser schools, and one on the present situation in the light of the past. The author's conscientiousness and accuracy are beyond quibbling about, and he shows an excellent discrimination in differentiating between the characteristics of the various schools; but there we part company; by the time the final chapter is reached, he has become the victim of his own method.

The main rhythm of school drama is rightly noted, reaching its climax in the 'seventies of the sixteenth century, passing through "competition and defeat" to the Commonwealth, and thence through "dependence and imitation" to modern times. Then, in rather less than three hurried pages, all this is put into relation with the future. By a false perspective, Christ's Hospital and Rugby are seen leading the way to a new independence and vitality.

That is not so, essentially. There is a revival of drama in English schools, but it is not wrapt up with the individual school, often with the individual headmaster, as it was in the beginning. In bending over his documents, Mr. Motter seems to have missed the new orientation, which is based on a very different view of the child and of life from that of the traditional "public" school; and no less important, it is based on a very different attitude to the audience. It makes such a vital appeal to the child's imagination that it is looked on as somewhat uncanny and not quite respectable, and for that very reason is suspect even in schools that pride themselves on their dramatic traditions. It is not a fulfilment of those traditions, but a disruption both of them and of the whole scholastic philosophy on which they are based. But all this can hardly be unearthed from manuscripts; it hasn't reached that stage yet; it is still fluid and vital. At the same time it is almost incredible that Mr. Motter has not made some contact with it, and that he can write a book of such thoroughness in other respects without even mentioning the Perse School and the influence of Mr. Caldwell Cook. If Christ's Hospital and Rugby hold the lead in this matter (which is very doubtful), it is quite incidental; the historian must look for something bigger than these or any other schools, a new continuity, a shift in perspective.

Again, the author shows by a half truth the limitations of his knowledge. He says:

I have heard that there are schoolmasters who think Shakespeare the only permissible author for the school stage; I have even seen fourteen-year-old Henry Fiftys, and although I have avoided nine-year-old Leares, I was once asked to cast a particularly blushing youth of fifteen as Caliban. Such performances are anything but educational; they are anarchic. . . .

This plausible sneer does not alter the fact, though it may obscure it, that it has been demonstrated that boys of twelve or thirteen (i.e. in the maturity of boyhood, not in the monkey stage nor in blushing

adolescence), can act adult plays, and especially Shakespeare, with an intensity and an abandon that are quite startling. To deny this is as sane as denying that boys of the same age can sing adults' songs and anthems with a loveliness and penetration that are the despair of adults themselves.

But a whole book could be written on this subject. It is hoped that Mr. Motter will consider his work merely as an introduction, and expand his last chapter into a second volume, based on several years spent out of the library and in the field. The considered opinion of an American on such a topic would be of real value. In the meantime, we are glad that Mr. Motter has gone as far as he has; it is significant that it has been left to an American to do this particular piece of work.

A Stalwart American

THE LIFE OF CHARLES G. WASHBURN. By GEORGE HENRY HAYNES. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1931. \$3.50.

Reviewed by ROYAL J. DAVIS

THERE is a well-founded tradition that Justices of the Supreme Court are careful to avoid any discussion whatever of a case which is before them or which may come before them except among themselves. For a Justice to bring up such a subject himself with a person not a member of the Court would be a most surprising occurrence. For a Chief Justice to do so would be doubly surprising. Yet no less a member of the country's highest tribunal than Chief Justice White sought the opinion of an outsider upon no less important a matter than the Standard Oil and American Tobacco Company cases.

The incident is related in the words of the man thus honored, Charles G. Washburn, who, having mentioned the conversation to a friend, was urged by him to make a record of the unusual occurrence. The date was February 11, 1911. Mr. Washburn was serving his second and last term in Congress, to which he had been elected as a Representative from his native Massachusetts. Seeing Chief Justice White pass his house that Sunday afternoon, Mr. Washburn walked out, shook hands with him, and told him how glad he was at Justice White's recent appointment to the Chief Justiceship. "I am very glad to see you," replied Mr. White, "and have been meaning to call on you and wish that you would walk with me, as there are some matters I would like to discuss with you and have your opinion upon." He continued:

You know we have these cases before us under the Sherman Act. I realize the great importance of the decision to the country and also the great importance of a unanimous decision, particularly because the Court has been so evenly divided heretofore. I want to talk with some one familiar with business conditions, and I know that you have had business experience, and I would like the judgment of a business man.

Justice White proceeded to put a definite and pertinent question:

Do you think that, if I can get the Court to unite on a construction of the first section of the act which will relieve nine-tenths of the cases that are likely to arise, remaining operative upon the very few combinations which are clearly monopolies, it would be a conclusion which I would be justified in advocating?

This question points toward the famous "rule of reason" laid down in the decisions in the two cases three months later.

Another bit of hitherto unrevealed history concerns Washburn's Harvard classmate and friend, Theodore Roosevelt. In a letter to Lord Bryce dated July 5, 1916, and relating to the political situation of that summer with special reference to Roosevelt, Washburn wrote:

I saw him on Sunday, June 4, on my way to the Convention (the Republican Convention). He then told me, three days before the Convention met, that he would not head a third ticket, but he asked me not to repeat this, because it would weaken his influence over the Republican Convention, and he then intimated very strongly that he thought Hughes the only man in sight whom the Progressives would accept.

Even without these significant disclosures the biography of Mr. Washburn would well

repay reading. It presents a sturdy, reticent, somewhat Puritanical, but public-spirited New Englander, a man of precise expression and of scholarly tastes as well as business ability, who mellowed as he grew older and who prized family associations more highly than political or any other success. His devotion to his mother and her pride in him make a most attractive picture. Serving only two terms in Congress, he gave his chief public service to his State. He became a member of the Massachusetts Legislature and of the State Constitutional Convention and was appointed to various bodies by Governors Crane, McCall, and Coolidge. He was always mindful of local duties and opportunities to an extraordinary degree. And he would have counted himself fortunate in his biographer, for excessive laudation would have displeased him almost as much as the glossing over of a limitation.

"A Good Woman"

HER BODY SPEAKS. By AARON MARC STEIN. New York: Covici, Friede. 1931. \$2.50.

ONE is often appalled at the damage that a technically good woman can do, when her goodness is not reinforced by intelligence and self-knowledge. Mere abstinence from evil is often the poorest guarantee of wisdom or a wholesome influence over others. Mr. Stein's novel tells of the tragic events caused by the refusal of Edith Kent, an unmarried woman of thirty, to accept life as it is, and to admit to herself the truth about herself. Hemmed in by her own notions, reticences, and hypocrisies, in a crisis she went entirely sour and became the instrument of convicting an innocent man of first-degree murder. When a perfectly simple act of genuine thought would have cleared up the entire mess, she spoke from chaos and the result was evil. One life was lost, and four others were seriously broken, all because of wretched habits of mind induced by her virginal flight from reality. The speech of her body was the gibbering of an idiot.

Mr. Stein makes the madhouse of Edith Kent's mind quite convincing. His analysis of her progressive hysteria gives every indication of being sound and reasonable. Throughout the novel, we come upon this or that explanation of Edith Kent (or of the other characters) that strikes home either to us or to the people whom we have known intimately. And though the lesser characters are not so successful, they are never near failure. Edith Kent's maid, Martha, is given some of the best parts of the novel, and Martha's young man, Jim, is excellent though of small importance. Richard Clegg, the lawyer with whom Edith is half in love, is the least acceptable figure in the novel. Mr. Stein does not seem sure just what to do with him nor just what sort of a person he is supposed to be. His attentions to Martha are not wholly credible. But all in all, the analysis of the characters, their emotions and situations, is admirably done. And no one of us is sufficiently without sin not to have a personal interest in Mr. Stein's psychological surgery.

All this is told in a heavily stylized manner. The stream of consciousness device, which is used through almost the whole narrative, often enables Mr. Stein to get directly at the thoughts and emotions of his characters. However, it is likely that the novel would have been more successful if it had been told in the more conventional method of third person narrative. More than any other kind of fiction, the novel where action is revealed solely through the workings of the characters' minds, needs a writer with resourcefulness, agility, and sensitiveness; by evidence of this book, Mr. Stein has but little of these qualities. Ploughing ahead, he is more of the speculative psychologist than the literary artist. The result is a number of tiresome pages and a good deal of forced writing. But in spite of this radical defect, the novel remains well worth reading, not for its story but for its analysis of motive and for its merciless spotlight cast upon a not uncommon form of intellectual and emotional dishonesty. The integrity of Mr. Stein's own mental processes is never once suspect.

A Political Murder

THE HERO. By ALFRED NEUMANN. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1931. \$2.50.

Reviewed by CLINTON SIMPSON

IN this novel, Alfred Neumann tells the story of a political murder and its consequences for the murderer. Hubert Hoff, a member of the Nationalist party in a European country, kills the Labor prime minister of the country out of motives which are partly political and partly personal. Hoff is a dancer in a café, and he has three friends—a girl who is his dancing partner, a dwarf who worships him as a hero, and David Hertz, a man to whom he feels bound in a curious psychic relationship and who is described as his other self or "double." The crime committed, Hoff is plagued by the dwarf, who gives him commonsense advice on how to get away. Hoff, however, confesses to the girl and, in a round-about way, to Hertz. Driven still further by his desire to rid himself of his guilt, he confesses to the prime minister's wife (who thinks him ill), the police commissioner (who thinks him mad), and quickly disintegrates mentally and physically, ending in an insane asylum.

It is quite a tale, at times truly well written and exciting. Herr Neumann has written some historical novels, and, as in them, the characters in this one seem to be in costume. "The Hero" is not a novel that grips one as the real story of a real murderer—that is to say, the story of the murder is real, but Hoff is not a real character. A newspaper account of a murder often holds our attention as effectively as this novel does, and to that degree "The Hero" is a good story. But we expect more than a circumstantial narrative of the events accompanying and resulting from a deed of violence if the novel is to be a good novel.

Herr Neumann does, it is true, hint at meanings that lie beneath the surface of his tale. Some significance is attached by the author, we may be sure, to the strange relationship described between Hoff and his "double." The author himself must feel that it is not very clear, for on page 213 he allows his characters themselves to try to explain it—to us, not to each other:

"Herr Hertz" (said Hoff) "for God's sake tell me—and use clear, simple language—why are we interested in each other?"

"Because our fates are similar!"

"There's no such thing, Hertz, there's no such thing! Those are mere words!"

"Because we are very much alike as men."

"What on earth does that mean?" cried Hoff.

"Are men who are very much alike therefore one? Is that what you mean?"

And on the preceding page, Hoff thinks to himself:

Is there really such a person as David Hertz, or did I invent him in order to have a partner in my cogitations? Perhaps he is only a kindly, soothing spirit. But whether he exists or not, we are one. We are one and the same man! At the most we have made two of one, so as to be able to argue about our doubt and despair! We are merely the dramatization of one conscience! But we are neither friends nor foes! In the end we cannot give each other anything! It is a terrible fiasco, a fiendish duel with a mirror!

In "The Idiot," Dostoevsky has two characters who are not "the dramatization of one conscience." They are symbols, but they are also human, and Dostoevsky did not have to explain them. Hoff and Hertz, in "The Hero," are, as Hoff almost says, mathematical signs. They are not human, at least in their relation to each other, and therefore require explicit explanation.

The Richard Aldington Poetry Award has been divided this year and goes to E. E. Cummings and Walter Lowenfels. The award goes annually to the ablest young American poet chosen by the editorial committee of the Paris magazine, *This Quarter*, subject to Richard Aldington's approval. The committee did not want the award to go to a poet like Lowenfels who has expressed himself to the effect that poems worth a prize cannot be written to-day. Richard Aldington did, on the basis of Lowenfels's earlier books. So a compromise was effected, and the award was divided.