

Christopher Morley

says of

FIRST LESSON

by JAMES ASTON

"I can only begin by warning you against this book, it is thoroughly immoral and I hope you will be properly scandalized. If you are a quite mature reader, and insist upon enjoying Mr. Aston's very Latin merriment, don't blame me. I would not dream of permitting anyone to encounter this book unless accustomed to jokes with a sprinkle of salt, strong spice and racy savors. Poor Mr. Belfry was a don at Cambridge; shy, pious and Quakerish, he had reached the age of forty-seven without ever sowing a wild oat. All his oats were Quaker oats. He had 'an inability to ejaculate Cheerio!' and even his students found him rather tame. Then he had a sabbatical year—a sort of witch's sabbath—and went to Naples. The moonlight, the leisure, the callipygian Venus and a tout in a museum started a moral downheaval in his orderly bosom. He went to Capri, where he chummed with the kitchen staff of the hotel. He went to a party with the chef and the chambermaids. How he evaded Eulalia (and was misunderstood); how he was ejected from his hotel, eloped with Beatrice (another chambermaid), rowed a boat to the mainland and discovered the eccentric little foreign colony at Anfitrano I could not possibly describe to you. Yet, if you insist... at least Mr. Aston, though wickedly amusing, caters his onion salad with real wit. Delightful, deplorable book."

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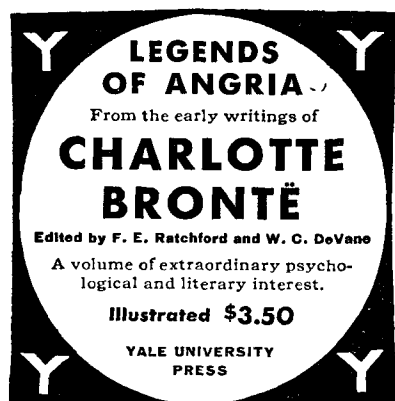
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The Reader's Guide

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 cannot be answered in print, a stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed for reply.

H. B. D., Wollaston, Mass., asks if this column has printed a list of books telling how to earn a living, especially such as would help those who would like to start a small one-man business.

THE book that came first out of the present conditions was "How to Get a Job during the Depression," by Warren C. Graham (Association Press). This is based on methods that were tested by the Y. M. C. A. in New York City with a high percentage of results. The latest is "Your Job: How to Get it and How to Keep It," by R. O. Pickard, which has just been published by Dodd, Mead; this is by a personnel manager who wastes no time in generalities, getting directly to the point in present-day circumstances. Another book just from the press is "the Girl and Her Job," by Esther Eberstadt Brooke (Appleton), a little handbook for beginners instilling needed confidence without being too rosy. The chapter on application is especially interesting; it gives sample "intelligence tests" of a nature likely to make one beat the brow. "I Find My Vocation," by Harry Dexter Kitson (McGraw), is a vocational guide for junior high schools; "Out of a Job," by Elsie Harper, and "Unemployment's Humpty Dumpty," a short course on unemployment problems by Ruth Steinmetz, are timely pamphlets published by the Woman's Press; this also issues a practical discussion of present-day situations to be met by women in business, "As Told by Business Girls," by Margaret Quayle.

"Get that Job!" by Robert Gebler (Stokes), is recent and practical; its feature is the attention it pays to the middle-aged man and woman. A vocational library should include "Jobs for the College Graduate in Science," by E. J. V. Menge (Bruce), which gives carefully arranged details of openings and training needed for work in mathematical, physical, and chemical fields and in connection with medicine, engineering, and biology, and of special uses for training in botany. The University of Minnesota Press publishes "University Training for the National Service," edited by M. B. Lambie, a large volume dealing with all scientific and professional services of the federal government.

To this equipment one might meanwhile add "Fifty Ways to Save Money," by Malcolm McCaw (Longman's, Green), and keep in reserve Charles A. David's appropriate and inspiring little book "How to Be Happy on Nothing a Year" (Bobbs-Merrill).

But the books on starting small, one-man businesses elude me, and the authorities I have consulted seem likewise at a loss. I would be glad of suggestions from readers.

F. M. S., Detroit, Mich., asks for a clue to author and publisher of an old novel called "Phra the Phœnician," saying, "the copy which belonged to my father was rebound without the title page." This is none other than a forgotten best-seller of reincarnation fiction, "The Wonderful Adventures of Phra the Phœnician," retold by Edwin Lester Arnold with an introduction by Sir Edwin Arnold. The last publication I can trace was by Putnam in 1917. If the name of Sir Edwin Arnold calls up memories of a little green book called "The Light of Asia," the wave of Orientalism that preceded the Omar Khayyam breaker may roll back to mind with it.

J. C. McM., Clarksburg, West Va., asks for the best unabridged translation of "The Three Musketeers." To me no edition is quite canonical without the incomparable text illustrations of Maurice Leblond. So the answer to this is the three-dollar one-volume edition published by Appleton; it used to be in two, very convenient if there were more than one D'Artagnan fan in the family. These pictures have made things hard for the movies; if an actor or actress does not look this way you know something is wrong. Also this edition is unabridged, and the translation marches. For that matter, I have read but one cut version, and that was a school edition from which every vestige of Milady had been deftly extracted. To my amazement you could not have told that anything had been taken out unless you had read the book beforehand, which goes to

show once more how little mere ladies have to do with its basic charm.

R. M. B., Blacksburg, Va., asks if there is a book dealing with the origin of common things or customs, as the origin of sidewalks, of buttons on coat sleeves, and so on. He has searched the U. S. Catalogue in vain. I cannot say that "Famous First Facts: a Record of the First Happenings, Discoveries, and Inventions in the United States" (H. W. Wilson Co.) goes into details of just this kind, but it has just appeared and will be in steady use in the reference rooms of libraries, especially in those frequented by teachers and newspaper men. It is arranged alphabetically, and its 2,500 events have chronological and geographical indexes showing what took place in any city or in any one year. The publishers say that unlimited pains have been taken to make all this accurate.

M. V. N. S., Mantoloking, N. J., asks where to find a copy of "The Brontës in Ireland," to which I introduced her in the first years of this department; her copy has been lost. She adds: "It had green binding with green shamrocks on the back." It did indeed, and it must have been a cherished book while she had it, remembering the cover always means a special sympathy. But the only way I know to get the use of a copy now is through the reading room of the New York Public Library, where, if you look up "The Brontës in Ireland: or, Facts Stronger than Fiction," by William Wright (1837-1899), you will find a book published by Appleton in 1893 and still capable of arousing a bright interest in a Brontë. I cannot know, of course, if all these "facts" are straight, but it is a striking proof of the vitality of the Brontë strain that these wild records of "Welch" the founding, and of Patrick's father and mother, Hugh Brontë the champion storyteller and his sweetheart Alice, should still so catch the imagination. It should be in the Brontë bibliographies; the connection with "Wuthering Heights" sources is unmistakable.

Speaking of Clemence Dane's Brontë play, "Wild December," as we were not long since in this column, it is interesting to note that no less than six plays dealing with them are now in the hands of London managers. This information comes from the Yale University Press, which has just brought out a selection of Charlotte's unpublished child-writings, "Legends of Angria." They say, with perfect truth, that these are of high psychologic interest. So is everything about the family, which may be why relatively so many attempts have been made to treat them psycho- (sometimes pseudo-) biographically. Besides Roma Wilson's "All Alone" (Boni), which deals high-handedly with Emily, there is Rosamund Langbridge's "Charlotte Brontë: a Psychological Study" (Heinemann, 1929) and Lucile Dooley's "Psychological analysis of Charlotte Brontë" in the *American Journal of Psychology*, Worcester, vol. 31, 1920, and the "Three Virgins of Haworth," by Emilie and Georges Romieu (Dutton). But my own choice would be E. F. Benson's "Charlotte Brontë" (Longmans, Green) and the brief introduction to the family offered by Abbé Dimnet in "The Brontë Sisters" (Harcourt, Brace).

J. L. J., Pawtucket, R. I., needs a comparatively recent history of the Civil War (within the last fifteen years) in not more than two volumes. The great history of the War of Secession is the "History of the Civil War," by James Ford Rhodes (Macmillan), published in 1917; this is not a condensation of any of his longer works, but a special use of them with new material. It is in one volume of 450 pages.

For conditions back of the firing-line, John Bach Masters' "History of the People of the United States during Lincoln's Administration" (Appleton, 1927) is most valuable. For the highly important matter of foreign relations of the Confederacy, especially with England, France, and Rome, there is a careful study by Frank Lawrence Owsley, "King Cotton Diplomacy" (University of Chicago, 1931).

L. E. M., San Bernardino, Cal., asks if there is a story by some rather well-known writer in which a burglar and a

baby are the central characters. This can be no other than "My Disreputable Friend Mr. Raegan," to be found in the collection "Gallegher and Other Stories," by Richard Harding Davis (Scribner). It came out in Scribner's in the days when you saved your copies of this magazine and had them bound in olive boards with a gilt stamp, very tasty—and what's more, the collection in which it appears is still in print. I will, of course, be reminded of Mrs. Burnett's "Editha's Burglar" unless I mention it, but Rags Raegan and his unexpected young companion make so good a story that if Hollywood is still looking for a second script for the young genius who plays opposite Chevalier in "A Bedtime Story," I recommend it for this purpose.

J. L. B., Tufts College, asks for a list of studies of T. S. Eliot, preferably of recent publication. The latest to appear in this country is Hugh Ross Williamson's "The Poetry of T. S. Eliot" (Putnam) in which the author's belief that "English poetry of the future will be largely unintelligible to those unacquainted with his work" has made him determined that the general readers may have no excuse not to find it intelligible. (I trust those negatives work out right.) The feature of the book is its admirable treatment of "The Waste Land," "Axel's Castle," by Edmund Wilson (Scribner, 1931), considers imaginative literature from the time of the Symbolists to Joyce, Gertrude Stein, Proust, and Eliot. "Mr. Eliot among the Nightingales," by Louis Grudin, was published by Drake in Paris in 1932; it is an answer to his "Poetry and Propaganda." Bonamy Dobree's "The Lamp and the Lute" (Oxford University Press, 1929) also deals deftly with Ibsen, Hardy, Kipling, Forster, and D. H. Lawrence. "Thomas Stearns Eliot," by Thomas McGreevy, was published by Chatto & Windus in 1931, and the same firm published "New Bearings in English Poetry," by F. R. Leavis, in 1932, including Eliot, Ezra Pound, Gerald Manley Hopkins, and others. The *Swansea Review* has printed two articles on his work by W. E. Collins (volume 39) and one by W. S. Knickerbocker (vol. 41). In the *American Book Collector*, Metuchen, N. J., volume three, 1933, is a check-list for T. S. Eliot by Norah Nicholls.

This reminds me that a correspondent told me the quotation from T. S. Eliot recently printed in the course of one of these replies had made him send for all he could get by this author, toward whom he hitherto had not been drawn.

P. J. McD., E. Pepperell, Mass., asks who publishes the works of the Irish playwright Synge. The complete works of John Millington Synge are published by J. W. Luce, Summer St., Boston.

J. A. R., Gowanda, N. Y., asks for books on American sculptors: the early school, the middle phase, and the outstanding men of the new movement. Lorado Taft's massive one-volume "History of American Sculpture" (Macmillan) has been revised for the new edition, and an added chapter by Adeline Adams brings it up to 1930. For the men of the newest movement, R. H. Wilenski's "The Meaning of Modern Sculpture" (Stokes) is brisk reading.

K. A. F., Minneapolis, Minn., is making a scrapbook collection of modern stage settings, and wonders if some of these may not have been collected in book-form. There is page after page of them over at the back of Lee Simonson's admirable book about the contemporary theatre, "The Stage Is Set" (Harcourt, Brace). "Horizons," by Norman Bel Geddes (Little, Brown), has put the practical dreams of a stage designer to use to the advantage of possible radio sets, store windows, ranges, steamships, restaurants, and almost everything else, in an outburst of prophetic fervor. The illustrations of Enid Rose's "Gordon Craig and the Theatre" (Stokes) have a special interest. Victor d'Amico's "Theater Art" (Manual Arts Press), intended for the prospective stage designer but interesting to thoughtful playgoers, has photographs and drawings. H. F. Helvenston's "Scenery" (Stanford University Press) is meant for little theatres and amateur production; it has many pictures; so has another book for non-professionals, "Stage Scenery and Lighting," by Selden and Sellman (Crofts). But the big picture-book is Joseph Urban's "Book of the Theatres" (Day: \$7.50), a survey that takes in four famous theatres, a music center, and a proposed opera house.

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Conducted by

CARL PURINGTON ROLLINS & JOHN T. WINTERICH

A FRENCHMAN IN ENGLAND. Translated from the French of FRANÇOIS DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD, and annotated by S. C. ROBERTS. Cambridge: At the University Press. 1933.

SOME three years before Arthur Young travelled in France to such good advantage, a young disciple of his, François de la Rochefoucauld, the son of the Duc de Liancourt who established an arts and crafts school at Châlons, went about England in much the same spirit that actuated Young. He made several journeys in the English counties, and the record of his trip through Suffolk and Norfolk has now been translated and edited from the original manuscript in the British Museum. The book is delightful reading, by virtue of the serene and detached sympathy of the young Frenchman for his English acquaintances. At that time the French Revolution and the haunting spectre of Bonaparte had not disturbed the Englishman, and save for the natural reticence of the British farmer, there were few impediments to an intimate knowledge of English rural life for so engaging a person as young Rochefoucauld must have been, and equipped as he was with introductions from Arthur Young.

The book makes fine casual reading, and has met with enthusiastic reception from many lovers of England and of good translating.

R.

Confucius and Villon

THE ANALECTS OF CONFUCIUS. Translated, with introduction and Notes, by LIONEL GILES. New York: Limited Editions Club. 1933.

AS a part of its endeavor to provide its members with examples of printing from all parts of the world, the Limited Editions Club has had prepared a fresh translation of the sayings of Confucius by the Keeper of Oriental Books and Manuscripts in the British Museum and has had it printed in China. I understand that this edition is not a reprint of his "Sayings of Confucius," issued by Murray in 1907, but a new rendering, with new notes and introduction. There is thus offered a complete text, annotated, and with a critical commentary.

The printing of the book has been done by the Commercial Press of Shanghai, said to have been, before the destruction of the plant by Japanese culture in the form of cannon balls, the largest printing office in the world. Japanese frightfulness incidentally destroyed the first printing of the book now before me, but the Commercial Press was reestablished and has now completed its work. The result, it must be confessed, is more interesting than noteworthy, as a book. It has the usual oriental touches of folded pages, indifferent type, and poor presswork. The binding, while in the Chinese style, is done in a very handsome Chinese brocade. It is a lovely binding of its kind, though not exactly adapted to our Western method of storing books. Adequately to protect the delicate material, there has been provided a Chinese redwood box with the title in English and Chinese carved on the cover. The effect is sufficiently exotic, and interesting as a piece of Chinese work, but it is not wholly satisfactory in its effort to unite the East and the West.

THE LYRICS OF FRANÇOIS VILLON. New York: Limited Editions Club. 1933.

IF the previous book left something to be desired in the way of fine printing, the present edition of Villon's poems quite makes up for it. It has been printed on the hand press by Mr. Joseph Blumenthal, and all details of the manufacture seem to have been carried out with great care and thoroughness. The paper is a fine quality of rag, with a pleasant tone and surface. The type is a special font of Mr. Blumenthal's, made for him a few years ago in Germany, and, as I pointed out recently in reviewing a book

from his Spiral Press, it is a remarkably sane and comely book face. It has almost no mannerisms, yet it has distinction—which makes it an entirely satisfactory letter for books. The presswork is good, with a firm, clear, black impression which could only have been bettered by dampening the paper. Nevertheless, if any printer wants to improve on it he will have a hard time. There is a very simple, well designed title page. The binding is in buckram, with a fine label on the back-bone.

The translations of Villon included in the volume are the familiar ones of Swinburne, Rossetti, Henley, Payne, as well as recent versions by Léonie Adams, who also contributes an introduction. Miss Adams's translations seem to carry the spirit and form of Villon's originals fully as well as the work of the older masters, though they lack the suavity and familiarity of such old favorites as Rossetti's version of the "Ballad of Dead Ladies."

For this edition Mr. Howard Simon has made thirty woodblocks which admirably fit the text and the typography. Yet nothing typographic can entirely reflect the sordid permanence of Villon's fame—our "sad, bad, glad, mad brother's name" echoes down the ages. "Shame soiled his song and song assailed his shame," as his greatest translator has said, for out of the insufferable filth of medieval Paris the lyrics of François Villon (dogged eternally by the police and his own fate) ring clear and sharp today. Yet there is little of hope in them, and they fit the mood of an age which knows more of Capone and speakeasies, of Ogpus and Nazis, of the "third degree" and "blotting out," than it does of sweetness and light. The underworld and the overlords are kin now as they were in Villon's Paris; there is grim appositeness in printing his verse today.

R.

The Story of De Soto

TRUE RELATION OF . . . FERNANDO DE SOTO . . . set forth by a Gentleman of Elvas. Translated and edited by JAMES A. ROBERTSON. DeLand, Florida State Historical Society. 1932-3. 2 vols.

THE latest issue in the historical series published by the Florida State Historical Society is a two-volume edition of the story of de Soto, told originally by "A Gentleman of Elvas," and printed by André de Burgos at Evora in 1557. Of the first edition there is a copy in the Bibliotheca de Ajuda in Portugal, and a copy in the British Museum: the third known copy is in the New York Public Library, and this has been used as a basis for the present edition. The Committee on Publications speaks of the new edition as "an epochal event," so important for the study of the early history of the United States is the narrative of the gentleman of Elvas.

The first volume contains an introduction by Mr. Robertson, and a heliotype facsimile of the copy of the first edition in the New York Public Library. The second volume contains a translation, copious foot notes, a bibliographical note, and an ample index. There are also in the second volume two reproductions of portraits of de Soto, and facsimiles of two early maps—Delisle's 1718 map of Louisiana and a manuscript map in the Archivo General de Indias.

So far as I know this is the only considerable historical work to be printed in recent times in America entirely in black-letter type for the text. The notes are set in smaller, Roman type. The type page approximates the original as to size and typographic style, but in both volumes all matter not in facsimile is printed in red rules.

The volumes are bound in brown cloth sides and parchment paper backs, with gold stamping.

R.

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A Pailfull of Scallops

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