

The Clearing House

Conducted by AMY LOVEMAN

Inquiries in regard to the choice of books should be addressed to Miss Loveman, c/o *The Saturday Review*. A stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed for reply.

*I wish that my Room had a Floor;
I don't so much care for a Door,
But this walking around
Without touching the Ground
Is getting to be quite a bore!*

THEM'S our sentiments. We wish that our page had six columns. We don't so much care for display, but this shuffling about among the questions we get without having space to answer them all is getting to be quite a bore. We keep two neat piles of Clearing House correspondence, one to be answered by letter, the other to receive its replies in these columns. Each week we play Eenie, Meenie, Meinie Mo with the latter, and each week out goes some question we've been particularly anxious to dispose of. Now this week, for instance—But it's useless. If we print the list of books that "picture the small-town life of the past fifty years" which we have gathered for F. J. R. of *New York City* we'll have no chance to give the information they desire to half a dozen other correspondents. So we'll send F. J. R. a letter, and perhaps some day publish an abbreviated list compiled from it in this department. Now, however, in the words of the immortal Walrus, the time has come to talk of many things.

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS ON HYPNOTISM

Of hypnotism, for instance, in response to I. G. of *Plainfield, N. J.*, who wishes some good books on it suggested. Our own knowledge of hypnotism, to be honest, is drawn largely from *TRILBY* and *THE BLITHE-DALE ROMANCE*, neither of which novels can be considered exactly scientific expositions of the subject. We knew, of course, of Binet's *ALTERATIONS OF PERSONALITY* (Appleton-Century) and of the studies of Wundt and Prince, and we have always wanted to get around to reading Joseph Jastrow's *FACT AND FABLE IN PSYCHOLOGY* (Houghton Mifflin). But, looking at it dispassionately, our knowledge seemed to be of general ignorance, so we wrote to Professor Jastrow, who never fails in the true scholar's charity toward the seeker for information, with the result that we can give I. G. the advice of an expert. Mr. Jastrow writes us:

In regard to hypnotism, the standard scientific book is still James Milne Bramwell's *HYPNOTISM, ITS HISTORY, PRACTICE, AND THEORY—1903*. The only recent work of importance is to be issued by the Century-Appleton Company, by Professor Clark Hull of Yale. This is an account of experimental researches. Many of the popular accounts are in part misleading, though readable. There is Hollander's *HYPNOTISM AND SUGGESTION*, 1910; also Quackenbos's *HYPNOTISM IN MENTAL AND MORAL CULTURE*, 1900; these must be read cautiously. They contain much that is questionable. The older work, good in its day, is a translation of Albert Moll: *HYPNOTISM*, 1890. Also, there is R. H. Vincent: *HYPNOTISM*, 1897—a good and simple discussion.

THE ETCHER'S ART

One appeal to an expert having proved so successful, we tried another. And so, instead of making our own suggestions to F. R. G. of *New York City* as to "the names of a few good books on the subject of etchers" and of a publication that will further the appreciation of their art, we give her those of Mr. Paul J. Sachs, one of the directors of the Fogg Art Museum, professor of art at Harvard University, and a collector of and authority on etchings. Professor Sachs suggests A. M. Hind's *HISTORY OF ENGRAVING AND ETCHING* (London: Constable), William Ivins's *PRINTS AND BOOKS* (Harvard University Press), and Lumsden's *THE ART OF ETCHING* (Lippincott). And he thinks that *The Print Collector's Quarterly* ought to be very helpful in inducting F. R. G. into an understanding of the etcher's art. We can vouch for the fact that it is a journal quite fascinating to the layman.

WHERE THE AUTHOR CAN TURN

Speaking of journals, A. B. of *Woodside, L. I.*, is on a hunt for "any book of recent publication that lists various publishers of magazines and books in this country, with a terse statement concerning the type of story or article that each company desires." There are two books which will, we think, meet his needs. The first is *WHERE AND HOW TO SELL MANUSCRIPTS*, a directory for authors, written, compiled, and arranged by William B.

McCourtie, and published by the Home Correspondence School, Springfield, Mass. This lists book publishers, magazine trade papers, buyers of verse, contests, radio and theatre fields, etc. Similar, but less detailed, is *THE WRITER'S MARKET*, edited by Aron M. Mathieu, and published by *The Writer's Digest*, Cincinnati, O.

BOOKS ON MISCEGENATION

The Writer's Digest reminds us that some time ago, when we included mention of it in a list of magazines on writing for which John MacE. of *Whitmore, S. C.*, asked us, we promised to give him the titles of some volumes on miscegenation, which he likewise desired. Those titles, promptly gathered, have been slumbering peacefully in our file for weeks until now at last we have got around to drawing them out. It's not an exhaustive selection that we are presenting, but perhaps it will serve for the present. *RACE MIXTURE*, by E. B. Reuter (Whittlesey House); *RACE CROSSING IN JAMAICA*, by C. B. Davenport (Carnegie Institute of Washington); *CAN THE WHITE RACE SURVIVE?* by J. D. Sayers (Independent Publishing Co.); *MAYA-SPANISH CROSSES IN YUCATAN*, by George D. Williams (Peabody Museum); *THE SOUTH'S PART IN MONGRELIZING THE NATION*, by Ernest Sevier Cox (Richmond, Va.: White American Society), and *MONGREL VIRGINIANS: THE WIN TRIBE*, by Arthur H. Estabrook and Ivan E. McDougale (Williams & Wilkins).

We wonder, apropos of his earlier question, whether J. MacE. knows that New York University is to hold a symposium on creative writing and criticism, continuing from November to the end of April. A series of informal conferences will be held at which a succession of well-known speakers will discuss the technique of the writing craft. It may be possible to secure notes upon the lectures by writing to the university.

THE SINGAPORE NAVAL BASE

Among the questions we have been storing up for the past few weeks is one from E. T. K. of *Ashmont, Mass.*, who is launched on a study of the Singapore Naval Base. He wishes a list of texts, magazines, or other reference works bearing upon it. Rather scanty pickings, we found when we began to look into the subject, though we have small doubt that a diligent study of English periodicals and newspapers would yield considerable material. According to an article in the *New York Times* for April 3, 1932, the "Singapore Naval Base project has been a political football." *The Contemporary Review* of London for July, 1930, in an article by K. G. B. Dewar, gives over a large part of its discussion to objections to the undertaking. There is an article in *Foreign Affairs* for January, 1929, entitled "The Strategy of Singapore," by Nicholas Roosevelt, which is illustrated by numerous maps, and *Pacific Affairs* (Honolulu) for April, 1932, contained one by Tristan Buesst called "The Naval Base at Singapore." Some slight information on the subject can be gleaned from the entry, Dockyards and Bases, in the fourteenth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

NOVELS FOR A FARMER LASS

And now the end of the column is really upon us and the request of T. S. of *Highland Park, Mich.*, for a list of novels for "a small-town high school girl living on a farm" not answered at all. If T. S. will start the small girl on *EVELINA* and *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE* and add Cooper's *THE SPY* and *THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS*, and Hawthorne's *THE HOUSE OF SEVEN GABLES* to them we promise to furnish the names of other volumes before she has ceased to enjoy reading these.

DOES ANYONE KNOW?

M. H. of *Westfield, N. J.*, writes for help in finding two poems. The title of one is "Vain Rebellion" and the first three lines are:

*I am continually more bent
In the particular way I go
While round me all things change, re-
volve.*

The other is a kind of jingle called "Bubblinlinds." The first line is:

If wardle wot the windy woo.

M. H. has searched without success. Perhaps one of our readers can help her.

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BY JACK CONROY

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A NOVEL

BY JACK CONROY

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PERSONAL

For the very select group of spirits who relished those luscious volumes—*Shandygaff*, *Mince Pie*, *Pipefuls*—we have a special treat next Wednesday—the first book of Morley essays in five years, and with a lovely title—INTERNAL REVENUE. D. D.

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MAGAZINE

An Inbetweenie

AN ELEPHANT UP A TREE. By Hendrik Willem Van Loon. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1933. \$2.

A HARDY perennial as a writer for both young and old is Hendrik Van Loon. Did I say perennial? Why, the man seems to have a book out every month or so. And they all sell and go on selling. Some, like his book on Rembrandt, are exhaustive adult treatises, but at the other end of the scale the lighter note is struck in such diversions as the work before us. This is partly a children's book and partly a satire on civilization, and rather suffers by being wholly neither. Nor is the satire exactly fresh. It is just a bit mildewed. It is the easiest kind of satire to write, which does not make it easy to read without slightly yawning. Of course Van Loon's scribbly pictures that he draws himself in about five seconds per picture, are superb, even when one is thoroughly acquainted with his style. He can make a living thing of the most casual scrawl.

I think he is at his best in this book when his own dachshund, Noodle, enters the story and finally plays the part of sleuth to rescue his friend the kidnapped elephant, only to have the elephant rescue him as he is about to become the prey of the villainous thugs. Yes, both Noodle and the cat are heroic figures. And even with such a perfect elephant book now on the juvenile market as the French story of Babar, Van Loon's elephants shine by themselves both in letterpress and colored drawing. That the animals should reject our civilization is quite natural and quite sensible. Various stupidities of mankind are pleasingly touched upon, and the fact that the human race is quite crazy unmistakably indicated. This is to come very close to the truth, so the veracity of Mr. Van Loon's writing may be praised.

I'll tell you how I really feel about "Elephant Up a Tree." I think it is an inbetweenie for Van Loon. But I also think you'll get enough amusement out of it to warrant reading it. It is short and readable.

A Talent for Ecstasy

GLORY. By Francis Stuart. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1933. \$2.

IT is becoming more and more plain that Mr. Francis Stuart is by right of birth a poetic philosopher, but that he is a philosopher who is still searching for his philosophy. His earliest novels, "Pigeon Irish" and "The Coloured Dome," which were so widely and deservedly praised for their extraordinary, luminous intensity, were compelling glorifications of mystical self-abnegation. His next, "Try the Sky," while in some ways less artistically satisfying, seemed as if it might well be the beginning of even greater things from him philosophically; for in it he devoted his talents to showing a happiness that did not deny the world, and to restating the old copybook maxims, which are such terrible truisms and so terribly true, and which every generation needs an artist to bring to life again. But his latest book, "Glory," does not carry on his progression of thought as one might have hoped; its solution returns to the almost nihilistic position of his first books, but its principal subject is the consuming desire for glory, a theme which is neither so important nor so well suited to his own talents as the themes of Mr. Stuart's earlier books.

Like "Try the Sky," the book begins with a realistic setting—in this instance that Ireland of down-at-heel gentry and horse-racing which Mr. Stuart can portray so well—but soon loses all pretense of realism. The heroine, Mairead O'Byrne, is drawn into international, not to say purely fantastic, events, when her father sells some of his land to a company which is building transcontinental air-routes, and which also is prepared to carry on war in the Orient on its own account. Mairead allows herself to be brought into the affairs of the company, in spite of the example of her young neighbor, Frank de Lacy, who is building himself a hermitage and who represents the ascetic ideal of Mr. Stuart's first books, to which, in the end, Mairead returns. But before this she is led to China, involved in an insistently bloody war, and becomes the mistress of both an English and a Chinese general, who are apparently intended to represent two different types of the conqueror's temperament, though this is not made very clear. The fact that no hint is given of what anybody is fighting for, or why the war should suddenly extend itself from China to India, is no doubt in-

tentional; it was Mr. Stuart's intention to present the lust of conquest in a pure state, apart from any reasonable motive; but the symbolism is far less clear and successful than the franker allegory of "Try the Sky."

The truth seems to be that Mr. Stuart is not, as one would have previously supposed, a natural mystic, but a natural ecstatic, one gifted with a talent for that ecstasy of which the mystic devotion is (on one side) a special case. He is moved by the idea of glory as well as by the idea of humility; and this book reads much less like an attempt to convey the actual emotion of the conqueror, a type with which Mr. Stuart is not nearly so much at home as he was with his previous characters, than like a piece of attempted self-persuasion.

That attempt at self-conviction is a much smaller design than any the author has yet tried; and it is also less successfully carried out. It is too easy to invent a story in which the characters of one camp shall be happy and those of the other camp shall too late see the error of their ways. It is too easy; and it is unnecessary; for the truth is not that such war-lords as those in "Glory" are not after all happy; the truth is that they do not and cannot exist. Mr. Stuart's attack upon the intoxication of glory was far better made by the authors of "What Price Glory," by showing that there is no longer any such intoxicant to be had, in the real world, at any price. And this illustrates what is the greatest weakness of Mr. Stuart's work, though in some circumstances it is also his great strength, his tendency to see everything as a symbol of something spiritual. Mr. Stuart is uneasily conscious of the difficulty in his symbolism, but he nevertheless falls into it on a large scale in "Glory," where he presents the abstract idea of glory as involved with the commercial operations of an aviation company, and is consequently driven to invent for the aviation company a set of quite incredible officials. One can trace the habit of mind which led him to think of the "conquests of industry" in terms of the conquests of war, and of war in terms of Troy or Lyonesse; but the ultimate result is that Mr. Stuart is led to find spiritual values where there are none, and where he should be the first to say there are none.

Gnomic Utterances

THE GARDEN OF THE PROPHET. By Kahlil Gibran. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1933. \$2.50.

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

WE are informed by his publisher that the late Kahlil Gibran intended this book as a companion piece to "The Prophet," and that for some years before his death he had been moulding its aphorisms and polishing its phrases toward the desired end. That he succeeded in producing a suitable, sympathetic companion for his most famous volume, there is no doubt; and there is every reason to believe that the eighty thousand purchasers of the American edition of "The Prophet" will find in "The Garden of the Prophet" all of the elements and qualities that have fascinated them in Gibran's work. They will find specimens of the studiously cadenced prose, that in rhythm, pauses, accents, and vocabulary owes so much to the translators of the Authorized Version. They will find the romantic unworldliness and the sentimental mysticism, expressed in gnomic utterances, that elude the coarse forms of complete intelligibility. They will encounter platitudes (such as that regarding the forest within the seed) ceremoniously presented in the guise of revelation. They will feel their spirits vaguely warmed by such generalizations as "If you would freedom, you must needs turn to mist," or, "Only the naked live in the sun," or, "Know you not that there is no distance save that which the soul does not span in fancy? And when the soul shall span that distance, it becomes a rhythm in the soul." On every page they will meet with sentences that will appear to them gravid with meaning. But those readers who are sadly earth-bound, those who are still so crude as to value precision in thought and explicitness of utterance, will find these same sentences empty of significance. Within such a garden as the prophet's only initiates are at ease.

The volume is decorated rather than illustrated (for the drawings have no direct connection with the text) by seven sketches in which Gibran displays his familiar fondness for the linear style of Blake.

Mr. Maugham's Jumping Johnnies

AH KING. By Somerset Maugham. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1933. \$2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

SOMETIMES I have a sneaking notion that I like the stories of Somerset Maugham as I used to like those earlier moving pictures that showed bronzed young Englishmen in sun helmets, strong silent Jack Holts about to enter a bazaar, down a gin pahit, rescue a fair lady, or shoot a tiger. I like to read of that sort of thing. But I should hate to meet a tiger myself.

Mr. Maugham, however, is a born storyteller. He is a yarn-spinner with a keen sense of the dramatic, and he does exotic backgrounds from experience. So I sat down comfortably with his new book of short stories of the Malay States, and enjoyed myself thoroughly. I have read so many of his short stories by this time that I am not sure whether this is his best book of them or not. But there are symbolic tigers. Of course, the popular opinion seems to be that "Miss Thompson" remains his best short story, chiefly because almost everyone remembers the late Miss Eagels in it, in "Rain." Or how about "The Letter?" I really don't know. But I do know that there is at least one quite superior story in this collection. It isn't the first, "Footprints in the Jungle," which is a story of cold-blooded murder that doesn't, somehow, quite carry conviction. It might be the second, "The Door of Opportunity," which is a study of a superior man's cowardice. Or could it be "The Vessel of Wrath," about Ginger Ted and the extraordinary Miss Jones? Or, to offset that satiric comedy, the tragedy of Olive and Tim Hardy, brother and sister, in "The Book-Bag?" That is an unusual and a delicately handled tale. And the story called "The Back of Beyond" is another tragedy, but this time the usual kind of triangle, only the story is filtered through a very good passive character, George Moon, the Resident. "Neil MacAdam" is a fairly old set-up, the story of the clean young man and the predacious sophisticated woman, the old story of Potiphar's wife; though Mr. Maugham makes his people real and individual. That ends the list of stories in the volume; there are only a half-dozen.

I think my choice would lie between "The Door of Opportunity" and "The Book-Bag," with "The Vessel of Wrath" certainly starred for comedy, in contradistinction. It would be banal to say that Mr. Maugham uses his materials with the arrangement of an artist. He is one. In his dedicating the book to the memory of a certain Chinese servant of his who observed great aloofness while they were together, and then cried at parting, he gives full flavor to a touching episode. He is sensitive to every manifestation of human nature.

Mr. Maugham would, I think, fancy himself somewhat as that memorable character of his, the Doctor in his novel "The Narrow Corner." Or perhaps it would be more pertinent to say that he regards the human tragi-comedy with the detachment of George Moon in "The Back of Beyond," whose final thought concerning the human race is this:

He recalled with what interest in the dry creeks of certain places along the coast he had often stood and watched the Jumping Johnnies. There were hundreds of them sometimes, from little things of a couple of inches long to great fat fellows as long as your foot. They were the color of the mud they lived in. They sat and looked at you with large round eyes and then with a sudden dash buried themselves in their holes. It was extraordinary to see them scudding on their flappers over the surface of the mud. It teemed with them. They gave you a fearful feeling that the mud itself was mysteriously become alive and an atavistic terror froze your heart when you remembered that such creatures, but gigantic and terrible, were once the only inhabitants of the earth. There was something uncanny about them, but something amusing too.

An artist should possess that detachment, if it is also tempered with mercy, as is Mr. Maugham's. He merely presents phenomena—but not coldly. And in the short story he is always a satisfying craftsman.

The Soviet authorities have decided to revert to "classical children's literature," and have put the stamp of favor on "Robinson Crusoe," Andersen, and Grimm.