

# 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.

## BIOGRAPHIES GALORE

"A CHECKER'D wreck of notable and wise" is all that remains to us of the list we drew up preparatory to answering the request of E. C. of *New York City* for outstanding biographies of the past and present which will permit her to form a connected idea of "this genre" of literature. We found ourselves running about like a chicken with its head chopped off, this way and that, scuttling back and forth, as we jotted down titles, and found that no sooner had we thought of a work like Carlyle's *FREDERICK THE GREAT* than instead of another biography of similar sort coming to mind Thoreau's *WALDEN* swam to the surface of memory, and no sooner had we thought of *WALDEN* than Lockhart's *LIFE OF SCOTT* rose to confront us. So now what we're presenting is a selection of books which pretends to nothing at all but offering interesting reading matter, which can be riddled on the score of omissions by anyone who cares to take a pot shot at it, which isn't chronological in arrangement and is grouped in the loosest sort of classifications, and with which we'd love to be wrecked on a desert island for several months. What fun to sit under the coconut tree, remote from telephones and deadlines and typewriters, and lose oneself in the fifteenth century with the Pastons or attend the court of Queen Charlotte in the eighteenth with Madame d'Arblay. Vain dreams, vain dreams!

Well, even if we shall not continue in any calculable fashion, we might as well begin by picking up the thread of biography in classical times. There are two books which have come down from the ancients which E. C. ought to read, and which will serve as the type of biographical writing which is the handmaid of history. These are Plutarch's *LIVES OF THE GREEKS AND THE ROMANS* (now to be had in one volume in the Modern Library Giants series), a source which has been tapped innumerable times for later biographical literature, and Suetonius's *LIVES OF THE TWELVE CAESARS* (Modern Library), a narrative which, as its name announces, begins with Augustus and ends with Caligula. From them E. C. might advance to some of the great religious chronicles such as the *CONFESSIONS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE* (Liveright: Black and Gold Library) and the *LITTLE FLOWERS OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI* (World's Classics), this last a tender and poetic record of miracles and legends centering about the saint. Merely because they are religious in theme, and not because they have any relation in kind or time to the foregoing, Renan's *THE LIFE OF JESUS* (Everyman's Library), in reality a history of Christianity as well as a biography of Christ, and Papini's *LIFE OF CHRIST* (Harcourt, Brace)—a work which, like the former, was an enormously successful book—seem to demand notice here. We hadn't as a matter of fact meant to go outside the field of Anglo-Saxon literature for our titles, but somehow these two volumes seemed to clamor for mention. They have both been so widely read in English-speaking lands that for the moment we forgot that it was in translation that they had attained their popularity. One other example of the biography in which attention centers about religion which would be eminently worth E. C.'s time, is Cardinal Newman's *APOLOGIA PRO VITA SUA* (Macmillan), which the Victorians read and debated with such vivid interest.

Variety's the spice of reading as of everything else, so E. C. might turn from the foregoing books to a brace of volumes which have been the progenitors of a long line of autobiographies of picturesque sort. These are the *AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BENVENUTO CELLINI* (it's to be had in almost all the good cheap reprint editions) and Casanova's *MEMOIRS* (Modern Library), which, of course, E. C. knows are the cynical and amusing reminiscences of a quite unmoral adventurer of the eighteenth century. Just as a matter of record, for of course she doesn't need to be reminded of them, we put down such famous works as Boswell's *LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON*, Pepys' *DIARY*, and the *AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN*. All of these are to be had in several of the reprint editions. Again we're going outside the field of English literature, for we can't write of biography and not mention such works as Rousseau's

*CONFESSIONS* (Everyman's Library) and Goethe's *DICHTUNG UND WAHRHEIT* (Holt). And we almost forgot to mention the *AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOHN STUART MILL* (Columbia University Press). Also we can't omit our beloved Jane Austen, whose *LETTERS* R. W. Chapman has edited and the Oxford Press recently published.

There's a batch of literary biographies which, of course, E. C. ought to read,—Coleridge's *BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA* (Macmillan), De Quincey's *CONFESSIONS OF AN OPIUM EATER* (Everyman's Library), Maupassant's *ARIEL* (Appleton), George Moore's *MEMOIRS OF MY DEAD LIFE* (Appleton). . . . But there's no use trying to enumerate them; we'd still be filling our columns with this list week after next, if we did more than start this category and stop it at once. Like little Jack Horner, whenever we stick our thumb into the biographical pie we draw out a plum. For instance, there are all those fascinating political and military biographies we can't take time to mention; works like Macaulay's essays on Warren Hastings, Clive, or Pitt; Morley's *GLADSTONE*, the memoirs of Sherman, Grant, Sheridan, the autobiography of Theodore Roosevelt,—a thousand and one volumes. The libraries of the last generation used to contain very generally two sets of books which constituted excellent biographical series. These were the *ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS SERIES* (Harpers) and the *AMERICAN STATESMEN SERIES* (Houghton Mifflin). They still contain among their titles some studies which have never been superseded in excellence, and though they are now extinct as series they are still in print. Macmillan, Appleton, and Dodd, Mead have all recently instituted libraries somewhat similar in character, and it might be well for E. C. to get her catalogues of these publishers.

And now, before we leave her topic (we'll have to take up E. C.'s second request for travel books at a later time), we'll enumerate rapidly a few recent biographies which we think she will enjoy. There's a group which portrays the reaction of the immigrant to his adopted America in *FROM IMMIGRANT TO INVENTOR* (Scribners), by Michael Pupin; *THE MAKING OF AN AMERICAN* (Macmillan), by Jacob Riis; *THE AMERICANIZATION OF EDWARD BOK* (Scribners), and Louis Adamic's *LAUGHING IN THE JUNGLE* (Harpers). Mr. Adamic, incidentally, is just issuing his account of a visit to his homeland, and his book, *THE NATIVE'S RETURN* (Harpers), is one of the most delightful of the present publishing season. We are determined however, not to classify or comment upon the rest of our list, so we'll stop doing both abruptly and merely present E. C. the following titles in a grand, disorganized mélange: Hamlin Garland's *A SON OF THE MIDDLE BORDER* (Macmillan), Ludwig Lewisohn's *UPSTREAM* (Harpers), the *AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LINCOLN STEFFENS* (Harcourt, Brace), Lytton Strachey's *QUEEN VICTORIA* and *ELIZABETH AND ESSEX* (Harcourt, Brace), Francis Hackett's *HENRY VIII* (Garden City Publishing Co.), Van Wyck Brooks's *THE ORDEAL OF MARK TWAIN* (Dutton), Carl Sandburg's *ABRAHAM LINCOLN* (Harcourt, Brace), and Gamaliel Bradford's *DAMAGED SOULS* (Houghton Mifflin). The foregoing volumes are merely a few of recent date which we have selected almost at random as illustrative of contemporary biographical writing.

## JACKSON AND JEFFERSON

The next request on our pad is from L. C. G. of *Shreveport, La.*, who wants information on biographies of Andrew Jackson and Thomas Jefferson. The life of the former, by Marquis James (Bobbs-Merrill), to which L. C. G. refers in his letter is an excellent one, but it carries its chronicle only up to the point in Jackson's career where he was about to embark upon the presidency. There is to be another volume to complete the record. We found the book of the highest interest when we read it some time ago, and critics who can vouch for its historical accuracy with a knowledge which we lack have been warm in its praise. The two volume life of Jackson by John Spencer Bassett (Macmillan) and the *CORRESPONDENCE OF ANDREW JACKSON* (Carnegie Institute), which Mr. Bassett edited, are among the most important works in the field. L. C. G. will find interesting and illuminating, too, *JACKSONIAN DEMOCRACY* (Macmillan), by William MacDonald. There have been

several biographies of Jefferson published lately. Among them one by Claude Bowers, now Ambassador to Spain, *JEFFERSON AND HAMILTON* (Houghton Mifflin) is, as its name implies, a political study rather than a straight biographical one. *THE DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY* is authority for the statement that the most important recent life is that by Gilbert Chinard, *THOMAS JEFFERSON, APOSTLE OF AMERICANISM* (Little Brown: \$5). Of older biographies H. S. Randall's *THE LIFE OF THOMAS JEFFERSON* is still highly useful. It seems to be out of print, but can doubtless be found in any sizable library.

## BUSINESS-LETTER WRITING

We are relaying a request from Carl Naether, associate professor of English at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles. He is preparing a history of business-letter writing, and would like to get in touch with persons having access to letter files or books on the subject dating prior to 1870.

## INLAND WATERWAYS

Our next inquiry can be dispatched in short order, for we think that E. W. L. of *San Carlos, Calif.*, will find the material he desires in reference to inland waterways in *SHIPWAYS TO THE SEA—OUR INLAND AND COASTAL WATERWAYS* (Williams & Wilkins), by Ernest S. Clowes, a volume which contains a varied and useful mass of facts in regard to inland waterways, natural or made. It presents sketches of historical development, maps, and a bibliography conveniently arranged under the headings of Historical and General; Great Lakes and Connections; Mississippi System; Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, and Pacific Coast. E. W. L. might also be interested in a substantial volume which has appeared within the last few weeks, entitled *THE GREAT LAKES—ST. LAWRENCE DEEP WATERWAY TO THE SEA* (Putnam), by Tom Ireland. This enters into discussion of ownership, route, etc.

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*Sienkiewics, Dnieper, Rasputin*

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Shameless Eve

YOUTH AND SEX. By Meyrick Booth. New York: William Morrow & Co. 1933. \$2.

Reviewed by MABEL S. ULRICH, M. D.

DR. BOOTH has set out to write a treatise about "Youth," and up to page 146 he has stuck to his task admirably. He sets before us in uncontroversial form the specific dangers he sees which spring from the present social environment of the young, both within and without the home. Admirably he pictures the sense of insecurity arising from the uncertainty of older standards, with the inevitable lack of "clear moral orientation"; our ignoring of youth's need for form and order. Very sensibly he shows the weakness of the so-called "new morality." "A person must be very innocent indeed, and very inexperienced in realities, to be capable of assuming that the mere liberation of the sex impulse will make us all happy." Again, "What we perceive is not anything 'bad' in youth, but the break-down of our culture, which has left a vacuum where there should have been inspiring life ideals." An excellent point that, too, his suggestion that in the effort to be playmates with their children, too many parents have abdicated their privileges and responsibilities, thereby "ceasing to give their children anything more than they can get just as well from other children."

More space is given to the differentiating of the various schools of modern psychology than seems warranted. Freud, Jung, Adler, Watson, all have made their contributions to the child's psyche. But since not one of the theories they have offered has yet proven to be completely substantiated, it would seem unprofitable to discuss their differences in a book of this nature where the exposition must be necessarily so superficial. Today, the Unconscious itself, so beloved of all lay-psychologists, is regarded by no less of an authority than Knight Dunlap of Johns Hopkins, not merely with suspicion, but with positive derision.

Towards sex education, Dr. Booth's attitude is sane and thoughtful. The treatments for the minor disorders of youth emerge with the diagnoses. The causes underlying youth's maladjustments are varied. Dr. Booth not only tilts, he wres-

ties with them. They include Behaviorism, Bolshevism, Bertrand Russell, Head-mistresses. But after all, these are but accessories to the crime. The real menace is that perennial danger, The Modern Woman. Modern Woman, who refuses to accept what the clever German psychologists and philosophers have always been more than willing to tell her about her "special values"—she it is who once again is doing all the damage and plunging the world into a retrogressive social order, and into—face it, reader—a matriarchy! "What is actually occurring in the modern Western world, is a steady drift in the direction of a modern matriarchy." "It is clear that women are gradually acquiring a favored and even dominant position." This is his theme song and we find it recurring again and again. For feminism it is, which has destroyed the Family. Eve, shameless Eve, has once again spoiled everything and made it impossible for Youth to handle its sex problems.

It must be because Dr. Booth has been so emotionally wrought up by the moral menace threatening society that he has not given himself time to coordinate his vast amount of material, and that he often neglects to exercise the "abstract and rational qualities" in which he claims the masculine mentality is rooted. One is tempted to quote a few of the sequences, illogical to the feminine mentality, with which the latter part of the book is enlivened. But after all, there is undeniable sincerity and even humility here which disarm unkind criticism. "The attitude of any given writer towards the problems touched upon in this little work must remain largely subjective . . . necessarily influenced largely by personal prejudices and limitations." When a man admits this, you can't rub it in.

One hesitates to say to what people this book will especially appeal. Certainly not to the young. For them it is definitely not intended. Bishops, one thinks of first, and some of the lesser clergy, men teachers probably, and surely those zealous ladies who contributed so much humor and drama to the anti-suffrage campaigns. All of these groups should find in it gratifyingly confirmatory material. For this reviewer it represents another honest and even impassioned effort to reconcile the tangled mess life presents these days, to an emotional pattern which fortunately, or unfortunately, the world has outgrown.

Proposed Roads to Economic Freedom

OUR ECONOMIC REVOLUTION. By Arthur B. Adams. The University of Oklahoma Press. 1933. \$1.50.

FOUNDATIONS FOR THE WORLD'S NEW AGE OF PLENTY. By Fred Henderson. The John Day Company. 1933. \$1.

Reviewed by MAURITZ A. HALLGREN

IN examining our present economic confusions Mr. Adams finds no fault with the framework of the established order. Indeed, he does not even bother to look at this aspect of the problem. He does argue, on the other hand, that within that framework certain adjustments must be made. His principal contention is that the industrial machine has broken down because of a maldistribution of purchasing power. Too much money-income has gone to investors and not enough to buyers of consumers' goods. This is hardly a fresh thesis. Mr. Adams, however, unlike John Maynard Keynes, Irving Fisher, and Senator Thomas, does not believe that the maldistribution can be corrected by currency manipulation alone. To him expansion of consumers' purchasing power through public control of business competition and of wage scales seems the more adequate and sensible solution.

Following the reasoning of Stuart Chase and the technocrats, the author asserts that our rapid technological progress in the period just before the 1929-33 debacle created a permanent surplus of labor. This acted as a check on wages. At the same time technological progress brought about a relative decrease in production costs. This should have brought about a reduction in prices, in which event the failure of wages to rise in proportion to the value of the industrial output would not have mattered so much. However, instead of going down with production costs, prices were held up through "over-expansion of building and capital equipment; artificial purchasing power in use in purchasing goods [the instalment-buying system]; and the withholding of goods from the market through monopolistic restraint of trade." Thus, "the great masses of consumers did not receive increases in their incomes equal to the increase in the value of the finished consumers' goods offered for sale." The difference went to the investing class, and this class reinvested most of its income. And so we had "reached the stage in our national economic development where there was a surplus of productive power and a shortage of consumptive power."

Using the author's own argument, it would appear that we might make some progress toward a solution of the economic problem by attempting to regulate the flow of capital investment, controlling or abolishing the instalment-buying system, and destroying monopolistic restraint of trade. Mr. Adams would have us believe, however, that while something should be done with regard to bank credit, the major solution of our economic difficulties is to be found in the industrial control program of the N.R.A. For in his judgment it is only by public control that

harmful competition can be eliminated and wage-income be forced up sufficiently to correct the present maldistribution of purchasing power.

While Mr. Adams takes it for granted that the bases of the economic system need not be examined, Mr. Henderson (the title of whose work is, unfortunately, somewhat misleading) holds that the principal fault may be found just there. He asserts that "the only economic reality is the provision of actual goods and services for the satisfaction of human needs." No genuine reform can be achieved, he declares, by regulation of capital investment or manipulation of bank credit and currency, since these have no economic reality but are mere accountancy devices for registering the facts of the ownership and distribution of goods.

Under modern conditions of power production the whole process of production has "become de-individualized, a process essentially communal, in which no private ownership claim to the output at any stage, intermediate or final, can arise by title of distinguishable individual productivity." Yet, under the property system as we know it, the community, as consumer, has no direct claim upon this output. It is permitted to apply its working energy "to the natural resources, at any stage in their passage on to final products, only as service to the owner, and on condition that the resultant product at every stage passes automatically into the same [that is, private] ownership." Stated otherwise, in order to be allotted a portion of existing goods for its current use and consumption, the community must devote itself to producing new goods for private ownership. In this way ownership retains "the custody and control . . . of the world's current working equipment and current sustenance."

Permits for the use and consumption of existing supplies, which are more familiarly known as money, are not issued direct to the community, but to ownership "on the security of the property rights which have been established over the producing system"; and ownership in its turn distributes them to the working community, but only as remuneration for the required services. The community, "with no property claim on its own products, can give no such security." It must work for ownership if it would eat. Moreover, to issue money direct to consumers as claims upon existing goods without such obligation would clearly undermine the private property system. And since this apportionment of the community's goods occurs in effect before the goods reach the market, it would be futile, Mr. Henderson contends, to attempt to correct any inequities in distribution by reforming or controlling the market. The market is simply "a process for ensuring that nothing shall escape from the property system into use and consumption without thus yielding up in prices the satisfaction of [the] claims of ownership." Summed up, he sees no hope of bringing about a better distribution by means of currency schemes, industrial-control programs, and the like, but only through abolition of private property; "the property system itself being the maldistribution."

NEXT WEEK  
IN  
THE SATURDAY REVIEW

SINCLAIR LEWIS'S WORKSHOP

A STUDY BY  
HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

and

THE UNPUBLISHED CHAPTER

By  
SINCLAIR LEWIS

This unusual literary feature is a chapter about Ora Weagle which Mr. Lewis wrote for his new novel WORK OF ART but which he decided not to include in the book.

You will undoubtedly clip this from the pages of THE SATURDAY REVIEW and add it to your collection of association items. We are congratulating ourselves upon our good fortune in being able to give you this exclusive glimpse behind the scenes.

NEXT WEEK  
IN  
THE SATURDAY REVIEW

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
THE HOSPITAL MURDER Means Davis (Smith & Haas: \$2.)	Hospital killer erases three patients and one nurse before odd troop of travelling 'tecs gets busy.	Violates rules at end, but who cares when excitement, love and mystery wax hotter and hotter.	Very good
THE MYSTERIOUS MADAME S . . . Simone d'Erigny (Lippincott: \$2.)	Parisian doctor is stabbed: colleague with fatal will power suspects himself: but Detective Barry senses feminine touch.	It won the 1933 Prix Roman d'Adventures. Your judge hopes nobody publishes the runners-up.	Elementary
WILFUL AND PRE-MEDITATED Freeman Wills Crofts (Dodd, Mead: \$2.)	Twenty-two chapters with the criminal and his ingenious murders, two with Inspector French explaining—and all good.	"Slow motion" tale gathers impetus until reader feels sorry for harassed killer as net grips him.	Worth while
MURDER FOR BREAKFAST Peter Hunt (Vanguard: \$2.)	Sinister phone call takes Conn. police chief to eerie private hospital full of peculiar people and lurking death.	Melodramatic hokum somewhat irking and conclusion weak but incessant action redeeming.	Middlin'
MURDER OF MISSING MAN Arthur M. Chase (Dodd, Mead: \$2.)	Fleeing fratricide meets death in sleeping-car, involving occupants of other berths, sharp old lady, two sleuths.	Murders on steamship and murders in train are coming so often they give us a pain.	Vin ordinaire