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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.

"TELL YOUR FORTUNE, LADY"

WE have R. H. S. of Worcester, Mass., to thank for losing a half hour from our work most delightfully. For when we came upon his request for books on palmistry and character reading, there popped into our head in that inconsequential way odds and ends of past reading have of springing to mind, the scene in *JANE EYRE* in which Mr. Rochester plays the gypsy crone, taking advantage of his disguise to tell the character of his guests and foretell their fortunes. We haven't read *JANE EYRE* for years, so we thought it wise to refresh our memory of the incident. And the moment we opened the book we were lost; we found ourselves slipping from one chapter to another, uneasily aware that we hadn't time to spend on the tale, and quite unable to lay it aside until we had renewed acquaintance with certain of its episodes. Only the sternest resolution holds us to our writing now, for we are panting for an opportunity to read the novel through from start to finish. Melodrama and outdated modes of expression can't rob it of its vitality.

Having thus by way of introduction to research in palmistry ambled into the field of fiction, we turned next to *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ENCYCLOPEDIA* to try to arrive at a few facts. From that source we discovered that chiromancy was an ancient art, known to the Chaldeans, Assyrians, Egyptians, and Hebrews, and cultivated by Plato, Aristotle, Antiochus, and Ptolemy among others. It is the stepsister of chiromancy, which is an attempt to discover man's tendencies through the form of his hands and fingers. If R. H. S. wants to go to the best-known authority on this subject he should read Cheiro's *YOU AND YOUR HAND* (Doubleday, Doran). This is a volume which has become more or less standard in its field. Another work which will give him information is Hamon's *FATE IN THE MAKING* (Harper). And when he has consulted these two authorities, he will find that he has only gone to one, for they are one and the same.

OF PUBLISHING, CONVERSATION, ETC.

We have a sort of omnibus letter from E. A. L. of Louisville, Ky., starting in with an inquiry on bookselling and publishing, passing on to a request for suggestions as to how to improve both oral and written style, and ending with an appeal for help in the selection of histories of English literature. To take up his opening inquiry first. Though it already seems in the distant past, it is only a short time ago that the publishing world was agog over the study which was being made of itself, a survey that neglected no corner of the industry. The Cheney investigation, while it lasted, furnished an unending topic of discussion wherever the publishing hosts foregathered, and the report by Mr. O. H. Cheney, when it appeared under the title *ECONOMIC SURVEY OF THE BOOK INDUSTRY* (National Association of Book Publishers), was passed from hand to hand in every publishing house in the land. It constitutes the most exhaustive and enlightening account of the book business as it is now organized in this country that is available. If E. A. L. wants to attack his subject seriously we advise him to read it carefully. Another work which he should find useful is F. A. Mumby's *PUBLISHING AND BOOKSELLING* (Bowker). Robert L. Duffus not so long ago published a volume entitled *BOOKS, THEIR PLACE IN A DEMOCRACY* (Houghton Mifflin) which is interesting as reflecting the tastes of the reading public. In this connection, as a means of getting an insight into methods of marketing books, E. A. L. might read E. Haldeman-Julius's *THE FIRST HUNDRED MILLION* (Simon & Schuster). Bearing more specifically upon bookstore problems are Madge Jenkinson's *SUNWISE TURN: THE HUMAN COMEDY OF BOOKSELLING* (Dutton), and Ruth Brown Park's *BOOKSHOPS AND HOW TO RUN THEM* (Doubleday, Doran). And, if E. A. L. is a novice and wants a brief, simple introduction to the field before embarking on longer discussions, he might supply himself with the five pamphlets which the National Association of Book Publishers distributes gratis and which cover bookstore advertising, publicity, and window display. Nothing, we think, is more instructive or more enthralling than the personal experiences of leaders in a profession or industry, and for that reason

we suggest that E. A. L. extend his reading to include such volumes as the late Ambassador Page's *A PUBLISHER'S CONFESSION* (Houghton Mifflin), a discussion of practical problems which was originally published anonymously, and *MEMORIES* (Dutton), by J. M. Dent, the English publisher. While we're speaking of England we mustn't fail to mention one of the most instructive of all the books in its field, Stanley Unwin's *THE TRUTH ABOUT PUBLISHING* (Houghton Mifflin). This is written from the point of view of the British publisher but its general discussion is pertinent to the trade anywhere. Finally, before we take up the second of E. A. L.'s inquiries we mustn't forget to tell him that the H. W. Wilson Company issues a pamphlet entitled *THE BOOKMAN'S READING AND TOOLS*, by Halsey William Wilson, which contains lists of books that are professional implements.

When it comes to advising, as E. A. L. asks, on the subject of "improvement of writing ability and ability to express oneself both orally and by the written word," a stupendous field opens up. From the days of Aristotle's *POETICS* to the present, counsel has been forthcoming as to what constitutes distinction in writing, and it is still an open question how much style can be taught by direct instruction and precept. The only way to write is to write, and to tear up, and to write, and to tear up again, and then to write, and to write, and to write until something pruned and delicately wrought is achieved. There are, of course, hundreds of books on writing, from grammars up to philosophical treatises. If E. A. L. has not as yet done so he should study carefully some good rhetoric like Hill's or G. R. Carpenter's, or Barrett Wendell's *ENGLISH COMPOSITION*, in order to master general principles of writing (many of which he will afterward have to forget if he wants to achieve excellence). There are certain books, like Lubbock's *CRAFT OF FICTION* (Scribner's) and a *WRITER'S NOTES ON HIS CRAFT* (Doubleday, Doran), by C. E. Montague, which the most finished literary artist will always read with delight and profit. But the most fruitful reading that any potential writer can engage in is the reading of other writers whose own work has achieved that quality which stamps it as literature. As to the acquiring of fluency and distinction in oral expression, that is an even more ticklish business to attempt to generalize about than the perfecting of a written style. Some people are born with a sense for words and some have to strive for it, and that seems to be about the long and the short of it. Reading may make a full man, but it does not always make an eloquent one, and many a happy conversationalist seldom reads more than the daily paper. On the other hand, there is no denying that a rigid attention to vocabulary, a determination to use words with precision and to eschew slang and repetition, can lift speech from the commonplace to the effective. As in acquiring fluency in a foreign tongue, one of the first essentials to success is lack of self-consciousness. Most of the youth of our land speak without any attempt at rich vocabularies largely because to use well-chosen language is to subject themselves to the ridicule of their fellows as affected or high-brow. A nice appreciation of words can be cultivated, and to the extent at least of causing careful selection of epithet and phrase can be made to lend distinction to speech. But it's all a great mystery, and as we pause to run over in our mind the conversation of some of our acquaintances we are forced to the conclusion that some of those among them whose address is habitually the most excellent have little interested themselves in literature or reading, and never consciously give a thought to the form of what they are saying.

We've rambled along at such length that we have little space left to discuss E. A. L.'s request for histories of English literature, from before Elizabethan times to and including, as much as possible, the present. But then we don't need much space, for what he wants is, except for the immediate record, to be found in *THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE* (Macmillan). That work (at least in its original edition) will furnish bibliographies on all periods if E. A. L. wishes to go more exhaustively into the stream of letters than its own chronicle permits.

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**GEORGE SAINTSBURY** wrote: "It needs infinite research to satisfy my ideas of thoroughness: for I have NEVER given a SECOND-HAND opinion of any thing, or book, or person." How many professors of Elizabethan literature DARE print that? George Frisbee.

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## The Fifteenth Colophon

THE Fifteenth number of the Colophon is at hand, containing as usual a varied array of matters grave and gay, set forth in equally varied typographic dress. It seems hardly necessary to repeat what has already been said often in this column as to the value and interest of this quarterly: it is to be hoped that many readers of the *Saturday Review of Literature* are also readers of the Colophon.

The list of contributors to this issue includes my collaborator, John T. Winterich, who writes on the Unsubstantial Character of Fame as it has affected the life of the author of "Rock Me to Sleep, Mother," Lawrence R. Thomas, on "Long-fellow's Projected Sketch Book of New England," Josiah K. Lilly, who has an intimate account of the collection of Stephen C. Foster's music at Foster Hall; Janet Camp Buck, with the story of Rossetti and his buried poems; Stephen Vincent Benét, and an account of his first book of poems; Robert P. Eckert, Jr., with the story of James G. Percival and his library; Percy H. Muir, on Thomas Moore's Irish Melodies; and Geoffrey T. Hellman, on Book Collecting. There is a wood cut—"A Charleston Window"—by Charles W. Smith, and the cover design is by Jack Tinker.

The printers are as usual numerous and the quality of their work is pretty uniformly good. There is the usual variety in typographic treatment, but no aberrations to distract the reader.

R.

## La Reine Pedauque

AT THE SIGN OF THE QUEEN PEDAUQUE, by Anatole France. Chicago, for the Limited Editions Club. 1933.

THIS is, in many ways, as handsome an edition of Anatole France's story as one is likely to meet with. Mr. Kittredge of the Lakeside Press has used one of the most beautiful of modern types—and an appropriate one: the presswork is good, if a little sparing in impression; the pictures have been carefully printed; and the binding is attractive. If one were to quarrel with the printing, it would be on the grounds—familiar to most readers of modern fine editions—that the book is too big. The long lines of type are not too easy to follow across the meadow of the page. Save for this one adverse criticism, the book is a beautifully executed one.

The pictures by Sylvain Sauvage are more than ordinarily competent illustrations, and there are an ample number of them, twenty-two water colors. These pictures were given place in the five awards made earlier in the year by the Limited Editions Club for book illustrations, and I hope that Mr. Macy will conduct a voting contest later on to find out how his subscribers like the precedence which the judges decided upon! There can be little doubt, however, that M. Sauvage has done an excellent job. And the reproductions are very skilfully rendered in color offset.

The book will rank as one of the handsomest which the Club has issued.

R.

## Rowland E. Robinson

CENTENNIAL EDITION OF THE WORKS OF ROWLAND E. ROBINSON: I. *Uncle Lisha's Shop, A Danvis Pioneer*. Rutland: Tuttle Co. 1933. \$2.50.

UNDER the general editorship of Professor Llewellyn R. Perkins, of Middlebury College, there is to be issued a complete and definitive edition of the work of Rowland E. Robinson in seven volumes to sell at the modest price of two dollars and a half each. The contents will include not only Robinson's familiar stories, but some hitherto unpublished material, and reproductions of his work as a draughtsman. Each volume will have an introduction by well-known Vermonters.

Robinson's particular country was the

Champlain Valley, where he was born a hundred years ago. He undertook to portray in prose the stories of his childhood and earlier, stories which have been read and liked by innumerable Vermonters and many others. If not of the first class, his work did vivify the legends and the traditions of western Vermont. Uncle Lisha, Sam Lovell, "Ann Twine" and the rest of his characters are very real persons to readers whose memories antedate the radio and the automobile; and there are many corners of the Green Mountain state where the countryside and even the conditions of life have changed but little, and where the frontier seems still close at hand. It is the potent lure of the frontier which, I suppose, makes these stories of Robinson's good reading now.

The present volume contains two of his stories, introduced by a Foreword by Professor Pattee of Rollins College and an Introduction by Mrs. Dorothy Canfield Fisher. There is a reproduction of a photograph of Uncle Lisha's Shop, and several of Robinson's very stiff wood engravings—Noon on the Farm, Fox Hunting in New England, Tapping the Trees, etc.

The printing is fairly well done, though one could wish that a little more style had been given this final setting. Lovers of Robinson will welcome the opportunity to obtain his work in this definitive form, and it is probable that new admirers will be attracted. It is a publishing venture well worth while.

R.

## Hand Printed Books

BRIEF INTERLUDES. By Ralph Bradford. Washington. 1933.

THIS is a slim octavo, printed on greenish paper, and bound in matching color of linen crash, with paper labels. The typography is good but not distinguished. Ninety-seven copies have been printed by Harry Richards.

What chiefly interests me about this book, and makes it worth mentioning here, is that it was printed on a hand-press by an employee of the Government Printing Office in a style as unlike that of the G. P. O. as can well be imagined. The inane and tasteless typography of the G. P. O. will have to give way to something more in harmony with the finer traditions of printing if its workmen take up hand-press printing and go to Pittsburgh to work in the Typographic Laboratory.

AN ARRAY FOR ONE, by Kenneth White, and NO TOMORROW AND JANUARY THAW, by Eugene Armfield. New York: Jaynet and Alan Holden at the Cassowary Press. 1933.

SO far as I know, these are the first fruits of the Cassowary Press. They are thin quartos, set in Poliphilus type and printed on the hand-press. Type and composition are simple and well handled, but I would suggest to the printers that it is a mistake to use machine-made paper on a hand-press, since it is so easily possible to use dampened hand-made; also, a somewhat more decorative treatment of the page is desirable. A study of Kelmscott and Ashendene Press work, not with the idea of imitation but for an understanding of what can be done on the hand-press, would suggest ways in which the remarkable flexibility of the hand-press could be used.

R.

## ERRATUM

The editor's note accompanying the verse, "Super-Power Carl," which appeared in *The Compleat Collector* of January 13, gave the misleading impression that the poem was written anonymously. The intention was to reprint it here anonymously, but not to disguise the fact that it had previously appeared in a privately printed version, with the name of the author on the cover. To avoid further confusion, we may say that the author is Henry Davenport, formerly Assistant Professor of Art in the Yale School of Fine Arts.

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