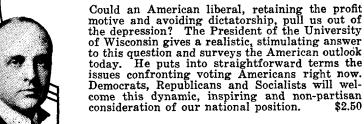
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THE HIGHEST

CRITICAL STANDARDS

WE take pleasure in calling to the attention of everyone, but particularly the librarian, the passage from "The Library Journal" for October first, which we quote below. It is from Book Reviewing in Review, an article by Helen E. Haines.*

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The Saturday Review of Literature 25 West 45th Street, New York City

* Helen E. Haines is a well-known specialist in library work, an author, lecturer, and one time editor of "The Library Journal."

The New Books

Archaeology

NEW LIGHT ON THE MOST ANCIENT EAST: The Oriental Prelude to European Prehistory. By V. Gordon Childe. Appleton-Century. 1934. \$4.

Within the last few years, archæologists have been less engaged in filling in the details of ancient history than in exploring its prehistoric background. To Egypt and Sumeria, as the earliest high civilizations, they have added a third, that of the Indus Valley, and are slowly uncovering the relationship of all three cultures through in-

tervening regions. In 1928 Professor V. Gordon Childe published his "Most Ancient East," in which he reviewed Egypt and Western Asia from the earliest human times to the beginning of the historical period. Since then Sumerian culture has been followed still farther into the past, and has shown continuity with several lesser civilizations, such as those of Jemdet Nasr in Lower Mesopotamia and Al Ubaid in Northern Mesopotamia and Iran. As we go backward in time the cultures of Mesopotamia seem to converge with those of Northwestern India, as if they had evolved from the same stock, and Elam shows more and more in common with both these centers. The 'Royal Tombs" at Ur, however, have disclosed a culture somewhat divergent from early Sumerian, and the neolithic remains at Tell Halaf and allied sites in Northern Syria may be older than anything yet found in Lower Babylonia, and suggest far-flung affinities with Palestine and Crete.

Professor Childe has now revised his book to include these new discoveries and points of view. Readers unaccustomed to Near Eastern place-names or to the way archæologists define a culture from a small inventory of tools, ornaments, and pots, will at first be left in some confusion; but the richness and broad implications of the material will draw them repeatedly back to the text. For students the book has no equal, as the only readable, timely, and comprehensive treatment of the field.

Fiction THE WEB. By Hugh Brooke. Doubleday, Doran. 1934. \$2.

This tale of horror is not the type of "mystery" story favored by our chief executives, political or commercial. It lacks the element of surprise and, therefore, has no need of the machinery of detection, no contrivance of false clues or carefully guarded denouement. Instead of starting from a fact of crime and focusing on the problem of its method or authorship, we begin with a setting and an atmosphere, haunted by fear and portentous with unnamed evil. That place of dread, Mulland Manor, stands closer to the House of Usher than to the Rue Morgue. Entering it from an autumn world of "mournful wind and sad dead leaves," we know it at once for a dwelling of hidden conflict and obscure

unease. Connibeare, its master, is a man of great riches wrung from a Brazilian jungle. There at the moment of success his partner Hendrickson has died, and returning to civilization, Connibeare has been charged with foul play. Officially cleared, he has lived always under a cloud.

The situation is complicated by the fact that the dead man's widow was once Connibeare's mistress. She has refused to take any of his wealth as a gift, but now after many years has decided to sue him for a share in it as her right. She sends her daughter to Mulland to get some needed evidence, but the pretty Katherine's liking for Connibeare and love for his son Anthony preclude her acting as spy. The real mystery of Mulland, she feels almost at once, has nothing to do with the old tale of Connibeare and her father. The place seems to be haunted not by ghosts from the past but by a presence both living and malign. And this presence, though masked from the family, is soon revealed to the newcomer's fresh eye, under the cheery solicitudes of the homely little spinster Miss Mitchell. She dominates the household, keeps the machinery of a great estate in running order, and secretly and sedulously plots against the mental and spiritual integrity of all who inhabit the place, from Connibeare down. She is the malignant drop that precipitates evil in the chosen locale, a fact which the storyteller himself explicitly and inartistically notes. If instead of giving away the bad Miss Mitchell in round terms, her secret had been revealed by steadily cumulative bits of evidence, the story would have been more effective. The element of horror and surmise reaches its climax far too early; and having been informed (rather gratuitously) that the woman has "a mean, puny nature," not even her later traffic with black magic or her eventual madness are able to invest her drooping figure with tragedy.

In feeling, characterization, and dialogue the book is too good for a mere thriller, in mechanism it is hardly good enough; so that it may easily fall between the two stools whereon chief executives and lovers of sober fiction respectively perch.

H. W. B.

PORTRAIT OF A COURTEZAN. By Charles Caldwell Dobie. Appleton-Century. 1934. \$2.50.

REACH FOR THE MOON. By Royce Brier. The same.

Mr. Dobie has a thorough knowledge of the history of San Francisco, but in writing his fictional account of the city during the 90's he is so conscious of the romance of San Francisco that in trying to catch its "feel" he mistakes surface facts for the actual atmosphere of the background. His story is often impeded by such statements as: "Bush Street was less steep than California Street and brought them as near home," or a page later: "It was an (Continued on next page)

The Criminal Record

The Saturda	y Review's Guide t	to Detective Fiction	l	
Title and Author	Crime, Place, Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict Enjoy- able	
MURDER IN A WALLED TOWN Katherine Woods (Houghton Mifflin: \$2.)	Deaths of neurotic American widow and blustering fellow-countryman sojourning in lovely old French town solved by clever aniateurs.	Background, characters, colors, suspense, love interest,— all okay, but the sleuthing is abecedarian.		
GIVE ME DEATH Isabel Briggs Myers (Stokes: \$2.)	Suspicion of grisly family secret leads two proud Southrons to ostensible suicide — but Terningham is doubtful.	If this one didn't palpi- tate so much it would be better reading. Per- petually quivering emo- tions slow up good yarn.	Aver- age	
COME SEE THEM DIE Harold Hadley (Messner: \$2.50.)	Crime reporter de- scribes sundry grue- some events in his ma- cabre and heterodox career.	Rough stuff, no frills, and considerable vul- garity, but acceptable for those who like the raw meat of murder.	Startling	
RED SUN OF NIPPON H. O. Yardley (Longmans: \$2.)	International intrigue, lovely Eurasian gal, handsome American Intelligence officer — and Greenleaf, ex-"Black Chamber" shark.	Washington diplomatic background and Secret Service methods, but plot is largely hoke and story creaks.	Below Par	
THE VISITING VILLAIN Carolyn Wells (Lippincott: \$2.)	Millionaire, with many wills and numerous le- gatees, apparently des- patched by pet snake, but Fleming Stone thinks otherwise	Matters testamentary, though necessary, tend to slacken interest in Mr. Stone's detailed and rather clever deduc- tions.	Agree- able	

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Double-Crostics: Number 30

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-five words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINI-TIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered (these numbers appear at the beginning of each definition) and you are thereby able to tell how many letters are in the required word. When you have guessed a word each letter is to be written in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends

DEFINITIONS WORDS I. 18-101-69-106-61-37-73-23-151-54. A good scout (Am. lit.). II. 3-76-115-80-15-142-107-29-154-85. Hardy country (two words). III. 72-114-158-2-44-63. More readily; more properly.
 IV. 133-99-144-82-47-119-36. Acute vexation. V. 50-62-140-128. Hindu God of departed spirits. VI. 70-86-112-64-81-58-98. Early English saga.
VII. 59-157-5-91-12. Fungus causing fermentation.
VIII. 7-13-53-89-40-49-103-24. Scene of carnage. IX. 17-96-118-123-100. Appease, mitigate.
X. 155-110-129-28-141. Living American woman novelist.
XI. 52-4-94-21-108-116-161. American author (1803-1882). can author (1803-1882).

XII. 6-65-132-34-166-11. When big, a swindler; when little, a boy.

XIII. 83-131-164-32-92-19. Domain of the goddess Vesta.

XIV. 20-102-146-25-124. To give rise to; summon forth.

XV. 163-10-75-87-143-42. American poet (1842-1881).

XVI. 111-41-56-152-16-35-126. Catholic shrine in France.

XVII. 31-84-150-125-104-113-79-97-39-148. Novel by Edith Wharton.

XVIII. 8-134-138-48-127-109-149-88. Historic town in Virginia.

XIX. 60-78-46-145. A Melville XIX. 60-78-46-145. A Melville XX. 45-74-120-160-14-27-67-33. Au-thor of "The Infernal Marriage." XXI. 139-57-26-93-159. An old-world evergreen. XXII. 135-95-117-9. A baseball XXIII. 38-130-162-55-1. Toward the xxiv. 122-30-165-156-147-153-43-105-66-136-77. Italian unionist. xxv. 68-90-71-137-51-121-22. A baked concoction of eggs, etc.

of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

Either before (preferably) or after placing the letters in their squares you should write the words you have guessed on the blank lines which appear to the right in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter. The initial letters of this list of words spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Unless otherwise indicated, the author is English or American.

)	2	3		4	5	6	7	8
	9	10	11	12	13		14	15	16		17	/8
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30	3/		32	33	34	35	36		37		36	39
	40	41	42	43	44		45	46	47	48	49	50
	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59		60	61
6 2	63		64	65	66	67	68	69		70	71	72
73	74	75	76		77	78	79	80	81	82	83	
64	85	86		87	88	89	90	91	92		93	94
95	96		97	98		99	190	/01	102	103	104	
105	106	107		108	109	110	111		1/2	113		114
115	116	117	118	119	120		121	122	123	124		125
	126	127	128	129		130	131	132	133	134	135	136
	137	(38	139	140		141	142	143		144	145	146
(47	148		149	150	151	152	153		154	156	156	
157	158	159	160	161	162	163		164	165	166		

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (NUMBER 29)

HENRY NEWBOLT—"THE WANDERER" Peace, peace awhile! Before his tireless feet Hill beyond hill the road in sunlight goes; He breathes the breath of morning, clear and sweet, And his eyes love the high eternal snows.

The New Books

(Continued from preceding page)

easy street for pedestrians walking from the downtown district toward Van Ness Avenue, for there was only one block of hill. After you climbed that it was comparatively level all the way, except for a slight dip before it came to Polk Street and another rise toward the avenue." This sort of writing is completely ineffectual in presenting the character of San Francisco; it is simply replacing the fascinating qualities which caused him to write the book by dull, topographical descriptions. Dobie's description of Bush Street comes from knowledge not from understanding; on the other hand Frank Norris's description of Polk Street in "McTeague" comes directly from his emotional self. Between these two approaches lies much of the difference between an excellent novel of San Francisco and one which has failed. The characters of Mr. Dobie's novel are not peculiar to the social structure of the city but are simply superimposed upon the background. His virtue of knowing San Francisco thoroughly has unfortunately proved his undoing, for though his factual accounts of the city are excellent, when he attempts to blend fact and fiction, he is so obsessed by the former that the latter becomes a weak shadow.

Royce Brier's novel about San Francisco at the turn of the century presents a very different attitude from that underlying "Portrait of a Courtezan." Like a character in his book the author realizes 'you can't explain this town," and so, unlike Dobie, he does not endeavor to "explain" the city, to card-index and file away all the various qualities which constitute its romance, but tries instead to present the general atmosphere of San Francisco. Unfortunately this kaleidoscopic presentation does not succeed until the last hundred pages, for the first two-thirds of the book is weakened by the worst kind of romantic newspaper reporting style. It abounds in the elements which make a successful feature writer — "cataclysm words," dramatic metaphors, and bombastic adjectives, all wrapped up in tinsel phrasing. With the exception of a few good scenes in a typical newspaper office, Brier does not bring his picture of San Francisco to life until he describes the great earthquake and fire of 1906. His long apotheosis of the city in this chapter for the first time exhibits a true sentimental un-

derstanding without becoming maudlin, and it is these last hundred pages of the novel which redeem the weakness of the first two hundred. Although for no reason other than this section dealing with the earthquake, Brier's book deserves to be ranked among the few novels which have captured something of the city's obscure style—its way of living and its way of looking at life.

BRIGHT IS THE MORNING. By Mona Williams. Smith & Haas. 1934. \$2.50.

This novel-hardly better than mediocre, in its essential content-merits attention, because of its technical excellence, and a plot-device, by which, moving backward in time, through thirty years, to the "bright morning" when the protagonists were students at Princeton, there is evoked, from the implications of contrast, a subtle effect of pathos. Laid in the East, in the present century, it is, on the whole, limited to an account of the efforts of three men—an architect, politician, and banker -to succeed in their careers. Two of them fail: one, because his personal charm is vitiated by an increasing lack of self-confidence; the other, because a defensive ruthlessness makes for him more enemies than he can cope with. The third, in counter-movement—the only one supported by an understanding wife—matures into a person of integrity and public importance. Although there is much authentic verisimilitude of detail, and a skilful choice of incident, to accent emotional significances, the characters are but superficial embodiments of the psychological conflicts epitomized in them. They are not deeply studied, in realistic terms; the author does not-nor do they themselves, in consequence-seek to evaluate, critically, the worth—and social context—of their individual purposes. The book, therefore, takes rank, as among the best of good "stories," expertly told, but not, in the most fundamental sense, interpretative.

STORMY ROAD. By Thomas Rowan. Washburn. 1934. \$2.

Mr. Rowan tells what, by inference from the information supplied on his novel's jacket, is the story of his childhood among the mountain people of Alabama, but it remains far from a novel of any artistic significance. Raised in poverty, living out his boyhood in a home that rarely saw a mo-

ment's peace, the narrative takes his protagonist from the hills to a small town where his father works as night watchman in a foundry, to a coal town near Birmingham where the long drawn-out feud between his father and a stepson culminates in bloodshed and still another removal. As the story ends, the fifteen-yearold boy hops a freight.

There may be a novel in every human life, but not every human being can write that novel. Actuated by the utmost sincerity, Mr. Rowan has attempted to set his native people down on paper, to trace with a hand at times ironic and at others tender, the course of their squalid, argumentative, superstitious lives; he has succeeded only in part. Snatches of conversation have the ring of fictional authenticity; there is an occasional glimpse of the Alabama scene, but the majority of the novel is formless and rambling; the majority of the characters have the most meager resemblance to fully-rounded human beings, and the majority of the exposition is set down in such terms as this: "There! The danger had come! Into Pa's eyes damnation had made itself known." Erskine Caldwell has done more ironically amusing sketches of the southern poorwhite; Emmett Gowen, less known but a sounder artist from every esthetic standpoint, has done the hill-billy in the round. Mr. Rowan could learn considerable from both.

Latest Books Received

ECONOMICS

The Science of Economy. L. Kotany. Putnams. \$3.50.

INTERNATIONAL The Other Germany. G. Bolitho. Appleton. MISCELLANEOUS

Nature's Way. V. C. Pedersen, M.D. Putnam. \$1. Cats Long-Haired and Short. E. Buckworth-Herne-Soame. Dutton. \$2.50. Appreciations of Birds, Fish—Sea. L. C. Persons. Miami, Fla.: Hefty Press. The Rowland Johns Dog Book. Dutton. \$2.50. American Secret Service Agent. D. Wilkie as told to M. L. Luther. Stokes. \$2.75.

PAMPHLETS

PAMPHLETS

The Daughters of Richard Heron. R. Cavan. \$2.50. Oscar Wilde Twice Defended. R. H. Sherard. Chicago: Argus. 75 cents. The Case of David Lamson. F. T. Russell and Yvor Winters. San Francisco: Lamson Defense Committee. The Acanthus Motive in Decoration. Metropolitan Museum of Art. 25 cents. Achieving a Balanced Agriculture. U. S. Government Printing Office. Conception Period of Women. K. Ogino, M.D. Harrisburg, Pa.: Medical Arts Pub. Co. The Problem of International Propaganda. I. Lee. The Folk Idea in American Life. R. Suckow. Scribners.

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the tang of marigolds." —Rebecca Lowrie, Sat. Review of Lit.

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N. Y. Times

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—Charles Morgan, Author of The Fountain

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