

Story of the Macabre

BLIND MEN CROSSING A BRIDGE. By Susan Miles. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co. 1935. \$2.50.

Reviewed by LAURENCE BELL

THAT the long novel is regaining favor among American readers there can be no doubt, but unfortunately for most writers who go beyond the "standard" limitations, such over-sized fiction has not as yet become common enough to escape at least partial judgment on this account. In a more leisurely era, with people less concerned with the fate that awaits them on the morrow, Miss Miles's 853 page novel would in all probability be hailed as a "monumental" achievement—reading through page after page of lyrical eulogies to the English countryside would be considered a rare pleasure. But in this hectic day, with readers demanding discussions of social and economic problems even in their fiction, "Blind Men Crossing a Bridge" is somewhat of an anachronism.

The story itself, when it is visible through the shroud of poetic mysticism, is interesting, and at times even exciting. In the beginning there is George Gurney, son of the arch-deacon at Quarrenden, and Meg Quainton, a daughter of the lower middle class whom he worships with mooncalf adoration despite the objections of both parents. George is a hypersensitive youth, so tender of heart that he grieves at the sight of a yew tree broken by the wind, who has been made into a snivelling, self-pitying coward by his sister's misguided efforts to take the place of his dead mother. A friend gives him an etching which depicts a group of blind mendicants on a bridge. Somehow the horror of the picture fascinates him and in attempting to copy it he meets with his first failure. One night he seduces Meg, in a manner that calls for a footnote by Dr. Freud, and the two are married and go to France, to a little town called St. Pol-aux Cedar to await the coming of the child. Meg, horrified by the queer circumstances of her betrayal, has ceased to love George, who seeks comfort and then love in the companionship of Hannah Wandless, an Amazon whose cynical poetry has enchanted the boy as did the picture of the blind men. Hannah scorns him, and when Meg dies giving birth to twins George returns to England and drowns himself.

The second and third parts of the story move faster, but not fast enough. Mazod and her twin brother, Berin, grow up, Berin is killed in the war and Mazod goes to work for the publisher who had turned her father down. Mazod has inherited all the weaknesses of her father, but with it a sort of divine courage that enables her to withstand disappointments that would have caused her father to fall to the ground and weep. She meets Jasper Brough, a priest turned art critic, who suffers from a variety of delusions, only one of which is the belief that he is impotent. Mazod sees in Brough an outlet for her maternal nature, feels that by bearing him a child she can save his soul, and after an interminable courtship in which she takes the aggressive role, she returns to France to have her child. The book ends with Mazod paying off her father's debt by finishing the copy of the blind men, and planning the futures of her children with optimism that seems a bit illogical in the face of what has gone before.

In the background of this story moves a strange procession of characters and events, apparently symbolizing the crass, ugly world with which Mazod has little contact. There is an idiot cousin, a bestial tutor, a superstition-ridden servant who babbles constantly of having seen Meg's ghost flitting over the countryside. Deaths occur and recur, by violence and by wasting disease. Given material of this sort, an American novelist, or even a Briton of the younger school, would likely have treated it as a tale of pure horror,

with less artistic results beyond doubt, but infinitely better suited for current tastes. Miss Miles, however, has sublimated the macabre, has used it only as counterpoint to her theme of latter-day quietism, and this weird mixture is made even more incongruous by the fact that the lesser characters are more plausible than the principals.

Educational Dynamite

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL PROGRESS.

By Charles H. Judd. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1934. \$2.

Reviewed by JAMES L. MCCONAUGHY

THIS is a timely, readable, worthwhile summary of the contemporary problems before our schools and colleges. Few people in America know more about American education than the author, who is head of the Department of Education at the University of Chicago. He clearly analyzes conditions, pointedly criticizes our educational failures, and suggests desirable reforms. Throughout, the point of view is that of social welfare, rather than educational technique.

The eleven provocative chapters are packed with educational dynamite. Professor Judd proves that we have inherited a school system planned for an agricultural society, ill adapted to an industrial civilization. The high school, once an institution chiefly for college preparation, will soon enroll nearly one hundred per cent of our children of secondary school age. They go to high school because the law requires it, and there are no jobs for them. If they can be made to want to learn, costs per pupil can be reduced, and more effective work done. School and college curricula too often have been expanded through pressure on the part of interested groups, rather than through a recognition of the real needs of the pupil. Patriotic organizations urge a study of the Constitution in the school; but this will not, of itself, make good citizens. Leadership must come from trained experts, free from any political pressure. College professors are not good leaders: "leadership for the whole educational system is not being supplied by the members of university faculties." "The science of education has encountered its most violent opposition from members of college and university faculties." Social and governmental problems must be discussed in the schoolroom frankly, if tomorrow's citizens are to be truly socially minded.

The author's picture of the ideal school includes the nursery school, a six-year elementary school, and a high school course of three or four years; from fifteen to eighteen, the youth will attend a "college," devoted to general education and the beginning of specialization and training in certain skills. It is noted that the average age of college freshmen a century ago was two years younger than it is today. The University will be devoted to professional preparation. "Recitations" will largely vanish, as pupils work out intellectual problems for themselves; much new teaching material must be prepared. Schools will be financed by taxes, on a much broader basis than the present local property taxes—perhaps state-wide, possibly federal.

The book is easy reading; five hours should be time enough for the average reader. It ought to be "required reading" for every member of a Board of Education; much of it they will not like; all of it, if openmindedly read, will make them more useful in their positions. Even more desirable would be the placing of this volume in the hands of parents of school children. Public school funds of any Committee would be wisely used if expended for the purchase of enough copies to lend to any interested parent. One wishes that the publishers could provide a cheap board-bound edition for this purpose, to be sold in quantities at cost to school boards. The author states, in the preface, that the book has been written "in the belief that the great majority of the American people are greatly interested in their schools"; true, but will they buy, read, and act? If fifty thousand American citizens read this book and thought about what they read, American schools might be definitely changed as a result. To our mind this is the best summary of the educational problems and possible solutions yet published.

James L. McConaughy is president of Wesleyan University.

Sarah Gertrude Millin, the South African novelist, is at work on a biography of General Smuts, for which he has given her much of the material. The first volume is announced for the Spring of 1936.

The New Books

Fiction

THE ISLAND. By Claire Spencer. Smith & Haas. 1935. \$2.50.

This book is laid on an island off the coast of Scotland, a place of farmers and fisher-folk; here and there is a sailor who has made long voyages, but for the most part the islanders have lived a self-sufficient life, until now, at the time of the story, a line of little steamboats begins to bring trippers from the mainland. The story is concerned with twin brothers, just out of school at the beginning, Gavan and Duncan Muir. Gavan regards his stronger brother with adoration, yet they are evidently destined to be rivals, from their first falling out over a sailboat; when they fall in love with the same girl, it is Duncan who gets her with child, but Gavan who is horsewhipped by her brothers; and they continue to cross each other until the violent climax with which the book ends.

Throughout, Duncan is meant to be one of those types of the Fortunate Youth who never comes to a good end, a figure who shall be evidently unmoral yet always glamorous and compelling. It is a character which is easier to conceive than to achieve; there are not many examples as convincing as Steerforth; and Miss Spencer's Duncan appears so plainly a rotter that one is impatient with Gavan for admiring him. Moreover, one feels that it was a mistake to make him Gavan's twin; the author's romantic claims for him are so extravagant, calling on us to regard him as almost a personification of the beauty and ruthlessness of nature, that it would have been better if he had had no family at all. And certainly, to give him such a father, mother, and brother as he has is going back to the outworn romantic convention that if he can achieve a striking relationship, an author need pay no attention to heredity. The rivalry between Gavan and Duncan will be more pointed if they are bound together as twins; so let them be. In the same way, Miss Spencer seems to have seen her island as a piece

of conventionally romantic scenery, rather than to have felt it as a force. The island provides picturesque backgrounds, and it keeps the characters constantly near each other, intensifying the conflict like a duel fought across a handkerchief; but the characters, with their social distinctions, their ordinary modes of speech and thought, might live anywhere; they do not seem right as an isolated people. The whole book appears artificial, made up of skilful artifices, but artificial none the less, melodramatic rather than dramatic, romanticized rather than romantic.

B. D.

DON'T YOU WEEP . . . DON'T YOU MOAN. By Richard Coleman. Macmillan. 1935. \$2.50.

One more of the remaining heritages of pre-Civil War days in the South crumbles in this novel Richard Coleman has written about the Negroes of contemporary Charleston.

Ever since Appomattox a few of the wealthier, more firmly established families in the older cities have maintained the institution of the "yard Negroes," the household servants who live in quarters just behind the Big House. These have been a caste above all other black folk,—a tonier, more exclusive group who must set an example before racial brothers, whose conduct must at all times have (relatively, of course) the serenity pedigree and breeding are supposed to confer. Yet this slight vestige of a gentle culture is, according to Mr. Coleman, about to vanish. His story shows how the relentless pace of modern life may invade even the iron grilles of Tradd Street, and bring low blood which for a hundred years has served the reigning Old Marster and Old Missus.

Combining two eminent South Carolinian names, Mr. Coleman calls his Big House family the Hugares. Their backyard blacks wear the same surname,—have worn it since long before John Brown was born. Of the present colored

(Continued on next page)

Christopher MORLEY'S
new book is just out..

HASTA LA VISTA
OR A POSTCARD FROM PERU
CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

Christopher Morley did not fly over the Andes nor live with the Indians in a mud hut. He was "just looking." He calls this an essay in economics, but it is his own kind of economics, with many humors, charms, surprises, and excursions into literature and human comedy.

Now ready at all book shops.
\$2. DOUBLEDAY, DORAN

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S
DOUBLE-CROSTIC
(NUMBER 55)

THACKERAY—"ROUND-
ABOUT PAPERS"

An acquaintance grilled, scored, devilled, and served with mustard and cayenne pepper, excites the appetite; whereas a slice of cold friend with currant jelly is but a sickly unrelishing meat.

The New Books

(Continued from preceding page)

generation Missy, the cook, is head. Her son, Tater, is gardener, yard-man, general helper until the day Mrs. Hugare brings the callow and delectable Lassies from nearby John Island to do housework and aid in the kitchen.

It is the love of Lassies which eventually brings Tater to the betrayal of the trust reposed in him as a "white folks' nigger." Embroiled in a scrape of which the girl has been a fairly innocent cause, he is responsible for the arrival of the police at the Tradd Street gate, for the sad reprimand Mrs. Hugare is forced to administer. "He had cut up a man as if he were a waterfront negro. He had been running around, like town trash, with a yellow woman for months. . . . He was a Hugare negro and he had acted like a nigger."

Far more than this twofold social implication lies in Mr. Coleman's deftly-told narrative. He is concerned less with the people who make his story than with sketching the night-life of Charleston's 32,000 Negroes. The endless round of dances, barbecues, "devil-fightings," dumb suppers (commercial undertakings at which one must pay for every sound

one utters), watermelon cuttings, and the like, occasionally makes a polygon of the love-triangle which is the basis of his novel.

The result is a picture of the autonomous moral code which governs—ungoverned, perhaps, would be the better word—the South's dusky population. It is a code crossed by class lines,—city Negro against country, house servant against stevedore, pale skin against dark; yet in all grades, as Mr. Coleman effectively shows, its convenient laxity is recognized.

A. B. B.

Miscellaneous

MEN OF TURMOIL. By various authors. Milton, Balch. 1935. \$3.75.

Books like "Men of Turmoil"—published in England as "Great Contemporaries"—belong necessarily to the cultural prize-package or smatter school of literature. Here are nearly two score contemporary "great" men, ranging in type all the way from Henry Ford to Einstein, written about by as many individuals who have known them in the flesh or made some special study of them.

The sketches are necessarily short—a bit of biography, a bit of historical back-

ground, a generalization or two. Anything definitive is naturally impossible, for the reason, if for no other, that in most cases the subjects are still in full career. The comments on Franklin D. Roosevelt, for instance, made by the *Herald-Tribune's* Mr. Ernest K. Lindley, are those of a working newspaperman who has followed the President through many adventures, including those of the last campaign, and however interesting, can scarcely be anything in the nature of a final word.

Odd bits of information are turned up. Gandhi was married at twelve to a bride of eleven. Mussolini couldn't bear, as a youth, the smell of wax candles during mass, or at any rate so complained. Some of the biographers are hero-worshippers, others frankly critical. No gayety, no charm, no spell-binding will save Lloyd George, so his biographer, Mary Agnes Hamilton, decides, from the sad verdict of history. "The major legacy of a man, who, at his worst, was a demagogue, and at his best a sincere democrat, is the contemporary distrust of democracy and blind inclination to dictatorship." One or two of the essays are no more than newspaper "special articles," others are written by scholars in the general subject.

Hitler and Stalin, Shaw and Chaliapin, Bergson and Freud, His Holiness, the present Pope, are among the great names. Taken as a whole, the job is capably done. The careless newspaper-reader, which is to say ninety-nine out of a hundred newspaper-readers, can sit comfortably under his evening lamp and skim pretty satisfactorily over the contemporary world and feel himself fairly well "up" on many subjects of which he knew practically nothing before. And that, of course, is the amiable purpose of such books.

Travel

SOUTH AMERICAN ADVENTURES. By Alice Curtis Desmond. Macmillan. 1934. \$2.50.

Mrs. Desmond and "Tom," her husband, took the regulation South American tour—down the West Coast, with side-trips to Cuzco, Titicaca, La Paz, and the nitrate country; over the Andes from Chile to the Argentine, and north from Buenos Aires, with stops in Sao Paulo, Rio, Trinidad, and Caracas. If, to old-timers, Mrs. Desmond may seem to have almost a gift for the well-worn and obvious, the journey was all delightfully novel and exciting to the author herself, and she sets it all down, from *sic* to "The Paris of South America," together with bits of history and legend and frequent glimpses of the folks met along the way, with the guileless liveliness of a discoverer.

Brief Mention

The much-travelled Harry A. Franck's last book of rambles is called *Vagabond in Sovietland* (Stokes, \$2.75). * * * Three little guides for people in a hurry cover Vienna, Brussels, and Berlin each in seven days. The author is Arthur Milton (McBride, \$1.50 each). * * * Carl Becker's many admirers will enjoy a collection of his essays just published by F. S. Crofts & Co., called *Everyman His Own Historian: Essays on History and Politics* (\$2.50). * * * An interesting little book on salmon fishing, is *Salmon Tactics*, by Percy E. Nobbs, with drawings by the author. This is a book on how to do it and contains good advice up to and including cooking the fish (Houghton Mifflin, \$3). * * * The first volume of *A Bibliography of British History* has just been published by William Thomas Morgan of the University of Indiana. This volume covers the years 1700-1715 and represents a comprehensive bibliography of the reign of Queen Anne. *The Thorndike Century Junior Dictionary* has been made from a selection of words based on a count of the actual occurrences of words in over 10,000,000 words of reading matter. By simplicity of definition and by large type it has been adapted to the use of children, also by very considerable simplification of the usual etymological data (D. Appleton-Century, \$2). * * * George Bronson Rea, Counsellor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Manchoukuo has written *The Case for Manchoukuo*, frankly a defense by a well informed partisan (Appleton-Century, \$3). * * * A book in the same field is *Japan's Pacific Mandate*, by Paul H. Clyde, which deals with the problems arising out of Japan's administration of 1400 islands and reefs in the Pacific (Macmillan, \$3). * * * Two new biographies appear in the Appleton series, one of *Mary Magdalen* by that excellent writer, Edith Olivier, the other of *Charlemagne* by Douglas Woodruff, a competent and readable volume (Appleton-Century, \$1.50 each).

PERSONALS

ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere; miscellaneous items appealing to a select and intelligent clientele; exchange and barter of literary property or literary services; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, travelling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature; expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purposes and character of *The Saturday Review*. Rates: 7 cents per word, including signature. Count two additional words for Box and Number. Advertisements must be received ten days in advance of publication. Address Personal Dept., *Saturday Review*, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

PSYCHOLOGY OF HAPPINESS—Change your viewpoint, and face life happily. Apply for prospectus to Registrar, School of Novices of the A.M.A.B.O.N.S., Box 265, R. F. D., Manteca, California.

DENNY—Will write as soon as I get the address. Box 276-A.

THE HOME BEAUTIFUL for sale or summer rental. Louise Swartz, Lake Mahopac, N. Y.

CREATIVE MIND, interests versatile, middle-aged in years only. Offers and desires stimulating companionship. New York, Box 394-A.

BUY SMART! Save money on Radios, Typewriters, Travel Accommodations, etc. What are your needs? F. Petri, 1107 Broadway, N. Y. C.

CAPABLE BOY, eighteen, wants summer occupation. Good driver. Excellent references. Box 360-A.

FOR RENT—Cottage near Bread Loaf for summer session. \$120. Box 334-A.

"HIDDEN HEARTH" Delightful house for inexpensive summer near Narragansett, Rhode Island. Four master bedrooms, modern conveniences, ocean bathing. Box 343-A.

HOUSE FOR SUMMER. To rent (to gentiles) in the Green Mountains near Wilmington, Vermont, made over farmhouse. Four bedrooms, bath, \$300 for three months. Completely furnished—all bedding, towels, etc., plated ware and china and kitchen ware. Address Mrs. John H. Sturgis, 154 Brattle St., Cambridge, Mass.

WOULD SEMI-YOUNGISH, sincere, non-chisel lady, write non-attached, professional, business GENTLEMAN, old enough for mature judgment, young enough to entertain, neither antique, nor ultra-modern—downright-easiness-of-mark partially exploited; survived depression with sense of humor, personable, idealist? I'M ASKING YOU—

FOR SALE—In the hills. Century-old completely converted barn, five bedrooms, modern bathrooms, G. E. oil furnace, separate studio, heated garage. Enquire Mrs. Arthur Titus, Washington, Conn.

MANUSCRIPT CRITICISM: Coley B. Taylor, Editor, Gotham House, Inc., contributor to *The Bookman*, *The Survey*, *Books*, *The World Tomorrow*, *Theatre Guild Quarterly*, etc., will criticize novels and book-length non-fiction. Terms on request. Coley B. Taylor, 160 Claremont Ave., New York.

PUBLISH LOCAL NEWSPAPER without capital. Facts 10c. United Service, Red Wing, Minnesota.

FAMILY wishing for ocean would rent house, furnished, to someone wishing for hills and a quiet summer in Watertown, Connecticut. Hills.

GENIUS lost in woods. Who will help meritorious literary achievement reach recognition? Mutual profit. Christian Lady.

CULTURED, refined Jewess, 34, would exchange views with interesting Manhattanites. Box 362-A.

MIDDLE-AGED man, single, cultured college professor; yea, intelligent. Interested in literature, social problems, music, good conversation, modern life, gardening. Desires letters from serious, not solemn, persons. Box 363-A.

AMBITIOUS young couple (teachers) desire change. Tutoring, social service, travelling companions, camp counselors, adult education. Summer or permanent. Box 364-A.

REFINED young woman, thirty, desires correspondence with interesting, cultured New Yorkers. Box 365-A.

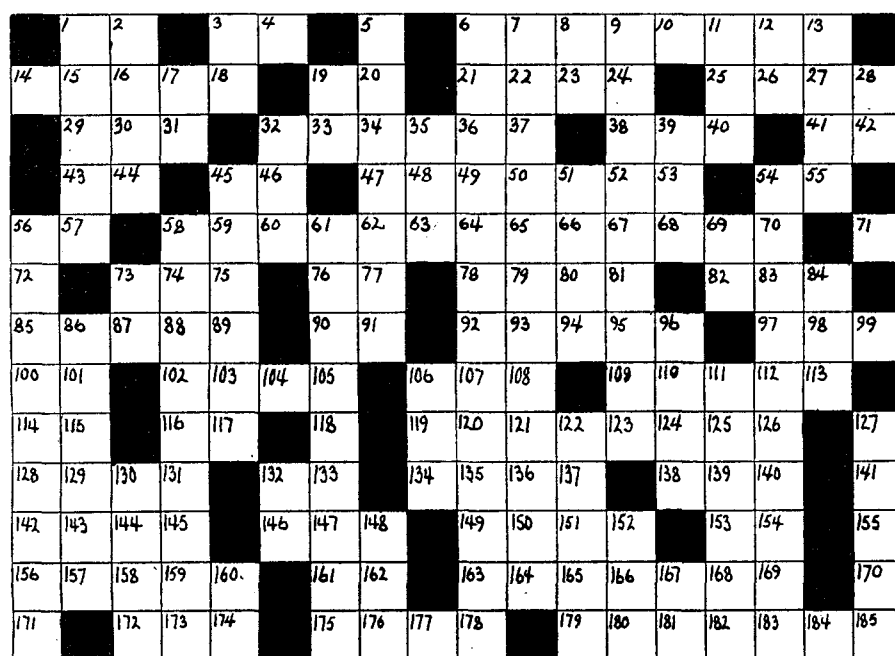
FRENCH college girl, cultured, seeks summer position: tutor (French handicrafts Arts); travel companion. Box 366-A.

GENTLEMAN, over 30, desires lively correspondence with refined, broad-minded person. Has studied in Paris; traveled extensively. Box 369-A.

TEACHER, 27, possessing drivers' license and sense of humor, desires summer employment at mountains, shore, or traveling. Prefers people, books, hiking, theatre. Box 370-A.

Double-Crostics: No. 56

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-nine words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter 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 of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters 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.

The solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 641 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

- I. A kind of boat.
- II. The body of Mohammedan traditions.
- III. Early pictorial symbol in writing.
- IV. Famous character in crime fiction.
- V. Observation point.
- VI. Unconscious, inanimate.
- VII. A character in Gilbert and Sullivan.
- VIII. Kind of low comedy.
- IX. Bungling work.
- X. Fashionable London thoroughfare.
- XI. Succulent bivalve.
- XII. Poem by Tennyson.
- XIII. Pertaining to motion.
- XIV. Town on Bay of Naples.
- XV. Vivacity, élan.
- XVI. To rail bitterly.
- XVII. To scurry, run away (colloq.).
- XVIII. Sluggish, motionless.
- XIX. To harangue.
- XX. Indian dancing girl.
- XXI. Substance formed by combustion.
- XXII. Aimless.
- XXIII. Capital of Assyrian Empire.
- XXIV. American author (1815-1882).
- XXV. Where Tammany meets.
- XXVI. Jezebel's husband.
- XXVII. Green pot-herb.
- XXVIII. Gilbert and Sullivan character.
- XXIX. English critic (1857-1926).

WORDS

- 55 106 99 170 111 154 160
30 146 40 116 172 139
114 53 31 77 18 121 5 63
12 54 64 16 73
166 36 74 141 42 102 14
68 142 72 126 39 29 3 13 37 41
103 176 181 83 124 80 134
113 125 167 175 117 82 156 144 179
43 177 161 58 15
112 133 19 115 84 130 9 143 47
46 96 25 61 120 185
90 24 153 171 105 44
85 129 180 52 138 56 88
45 159 81 108 174 70 75 104
23 152 137 155 62
123 92 32 27 10 131 97
101 145 26 109 98 95 163 65 79
33 60 94 48 6
110 8 49 67 135
17 71 107 76 182 128
157 59 87 119
136 100 178 158 91 127
147 1 28 184 151 169 21
148 38 57 150
132 164 51 7 93
118 149 22 11
4 50 35 86 66 165 78
89 20 183 162
34 173 69 168 2 140 122