

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.

PARTY GAMES FOR GROWN-UPS

A. J., H., of Meadowlands, Pa., would like a book covering modern party games for grown-ups.

HE will probably be interested in learning, if he has not already noticed the announcement, that Doubleday, Doran & Co. are just launching a department to be devoted entirely to entertainment. It will be under the direction of Jerome S. Meyer, whose *MENTAL WHOOP-EE* and *MIND YOUR P'S AND Q'S* (both Simon & Schuster) are books of exactly the sort A. J. H. wants. This new department, to be known as Heyday House, will publish puzzles, games, and some books of humor. Many of the publications will be designed especially for parties, where guests compete against time and one another. Among the books that he can fall back on now are *PARTY GAMES FOR ALL OCCASIONS* (Lippincott), by Bernard Stanley, *WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?* (Stokes), by D. F. Fisher and others, *GOOD TIMES FOR ALL* (French), by N. B. Lamkin, and *WHAT'LL WE DO NOW?* (Simon & Schuster), by E. Longstreth and L. T. Holton. And, of course, there's always *THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF GAMES* (Dutton), edited by E. Lasker, to which to refer.

Events are too rapid for the processes of magazine publication. I haven't even been able to get the foregoing paragraph into print before a letter reaches me from Mr. Jerome S. Meyer announcing the issuance of the first of the Heyday books, *IT'S ABOUT TIME*, and a postcard arrives from its author, Gerald L. Kaufman, bringing his greetings and the statement that "It's about Time for a book about time." Mr. Meyer says, that in addition to this volume, Heyday House has three other selections on the Spring list, *BRINGING SHERLOCK HOME*, a detective game for competitive playing; *MAY I LEAVE THE ROOM?*, a new twist in party fun where the guests entertain one another by performing stunts in magic, and *NAMING QUINTUPLETS*, a question and answer book.

ON HUMOR

F. de B. W., of Montreal, Canada, would like a volume on the writing of humor. "Not too cut and dried and not too textbookish. A survey of humor in its varied forms, showing the why and how of humorous situations, statements, and narratives."

If F. de B. W. will possess his soul in patience a few days longer he will be able to get the very book he wants, for on March twentieth Dodd, Mead & Co. are to publish Stephen Leacock's *WHY LAUGH—THE THEORY AND TECHNIQUE OF HUMOR*. Mr. Leacock, as everyone knows who has read him in his happiest light vein, is no mean humorist himself. Indeed his gaiety sits as lightly on him as his economics does soberly when he chooses to be the college professor instead of the literary man. His book seems to promise delightful reading. I've been dipping into the galley proofs which came to my desk the other day and find fascinating stuff in them. Mr. Leacock begins frivolously enough with the crudest sort of jokes—the sort that set school children to giggling or fill the untutored adult mind with glee—but ends on a deep note of seriousness by envisioning the universe as ending "with one vast, silent, unappreciated joke." Horace Walpole's "the world is a comedy to those that think" in another version. In the course of the discussion that thus ranges from primitive merriment to cosmic predicament he introduces example after example to illustrate his thesis, discusses the great humorists like Dickens and Mark Twain, and, to paraphrase, analyzes where is humor bred, or in the heart or in the head. F. de B. W. ought to find the book to his liking.

A DIVERSION FROM MUSIC

B. N., of Ogden, Utah, is looking for something that might be read at a children's musical recital as a means of varying the program. It is to be read by an adult but should appeal to children.

Lucy G. Lillie's *THE STORY OF MUSIC AND MUSICIANS* (Harpers) contains anecdotes of famous composers, the story of the composition of favorite classics, and an account of the origins of different musical forms. I should think that with a little adroitness an interesting half hour's

reading could be culled from this book, with enough variety and enough that is entertaining as well as informative to hold the attention of a youthful audience.

BIRDS OF THE SOUTHWEST

R. P. F., of Tucson, Arizona, wishes the names of some illustrated books which will help her identify the birds of her section of her country. She remembers that some time ago I mentioned several volumes of the sort but cannot recall their titles.

The books to which she refers did not deal specifically with her corner of the United States, but nevertheless would be helpful to her. They were Anna B. Comstock's *HANDBOOK OF NATURE STUDY* (Ithaca, N. Y., Comstock Publishing Co.), a compendium dealing not alone with birds, but with insects, flowers, etc.; two volumes in the Pocket Nature Library issued by Doubleday, Doran, one covering water birds and the other birds of prey, and the more comprehensive *BIRDS IN NATURE*, by Neltje Blanchan, in the Nature Library published by Nelson Doubleday. Elliott Koues's *KEY TO NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS* (Page: \$15) covers every known species of living and fossil bird to be found on the American continent north of Mexico, including those of Greenland. The particular book, however, which treats of R. P. F.'s section is *FIELD BOOK OF BIRDS OF THE SOUTHWESTERN UNITED STATES* (Houghton Mifflin), by L. E. Wyman and E. F. Burdell. It won't be of any use to her for her special purposes, but nevertheless R. P. F. may be interested to know that a little book has just appeared, unique among works on birds, I believe, in presenting a method of recognizing the birds of the Northeastern United States by their calls without the use of musical notes. It is by Aretas A. Saunders, and is called *BIRD SONGS* (Appleton-Century). I have it on the authority of Mr. Canby, in whom a good naturalist was lost when he took to literature, that it is an excellent book.

PRINTING IN GERMANY

J. D. B., of Dallas, Texas, most engagingly wonders whether I will bother with a mere school girl. She is writing a term theme on the history of printing in Germany and wants help on the subject.

If she can get hold of John Clyde Oswald's *HISTORY OF PRINTING* (Appleton-Century), she will find a full account of its development in Germany from earliest times to the present there. If she needs merely a synopsis she will find Merritt Way Haynes's *STUDENT'S HISTORY OF PRINTING* (McGraw-Hill) a useful reference work.

ESTHETICS

G. G., of New York City, is on the hunt for a work on esthetics which will be neither too philosophical nor too banal. He outlines the sort of book he wants by translating a paragraph from Alfred Heussner's *DIE PHILOSOPHISCHEN WELTANSCHAUUNGEN UND IHRE HAUPTVERTEILER*.

If I gather his desire correctly from this paragraph the book he needs is Frank Jewett Mather's *CONCERNING BEAUTY*, which the Princeton University Press has just this minute published. Mr. Mather, who is professor of art, critic of art, and writer on matters artistic and literary, possesses clarity, grace, and charm. This book is in substance a series of lectures which he delivered, and, though the work of a scholar, is couched in language which brings it into the range of the layman's understanding. G. G. can gather an idea of the method it follows from a synopsis of the last chapter, entitled *On Taste and the Varieties of Beauty*, which takes up such subjects as truthfulness of art and of life; the comic and allied branches; collective taste; shifts in taste; laboratory esthetics; the sublime; the delectable; the characteristic. It contains a brief selected bibliography, and makes special acknowledgment in the preface to another work which G. G. should read, John Dewey's *ART AS EXPERIENCE* (Minton, Balch).

THE ALPHABET AND WRITING

Mr. Erward Delavan Perry has again put me in his debt by adding to my recent suggestions to J. F. B. of Louisville, Ky., the title of "a singularly valuable and accurate little book by B. L. Ullman of the University of Chicago: *THIS IS ANCIENT WRITING AND ITS INFLUENCE* (Longmans, Green), one of the series entitled *Our Debt to Greece and Rome*."

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