

maturity and the resources of the developed theatrical stage of the essentials of the famous legend, and the expression of the recapturing in English touched with poetic beauty.

Young Turney has set himself no easy job and here and there its difficulties momentarily try his skill. That he himself has appreciated the rubs of the task is evident from the fact that, in the two years he has been applying himself to it, he has written no less than six different revisions of his play. In the last of them that I have read there are still minor indications of uncertainty, but nonetheless there emerges the uncommonly interesting literary-dramatic performance that I have noted. Upon reading it, Sean O'Casey, the illustrious Irish dramatist, sought to express his enthusiasm in an article "I found this," he wrote me;

to be a play! I forget whether or no you mentioned it to me when I was in New York, but I find you do in a recently published article. It is, in my opinion, one of the best things I have read for a long time. I wrote an article called "I Spy a Fine Play" about it, but the papers here in London weren't interested, so I got the article back. The English theatre is a deceased theatre.

Of the new American plays announced for production this season that I have looked at in manuscript "Daughters of Atreus" is thus far and by all odds the best. It aims high and it often hits the mark. But it will demand the best of casting, the best of acting, and the best of direction if it is not to droop theatrically.

# The Clearing House

CONDUCTED BY AMY LOVEMAN

*Inquiries, accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope, should be directed to Miss Loveman, in care of The Saturday Review.*

A BALANCED RATION FOR  
A WEEK'S READING

MEN AND BRETHREN. By James G. Cozzens. *Harcourt, Brace.*

A YANKEE SAINT. By Robert Al-  
lerton Parker. *Putnam.*

THE STRANGE DEATH OF LIB-  
ERAL ENGLAND. By George  
Dangerfield. *Random House.*

Through F. L. S. of Chicago, Ill., comes the following request: "I would greatly appreciate your forwarding to me a list of historical readings (novels) that deal with the different periods of American history."

THERE is, of course, a vast amount of literature which takes the American past for its subject, and which in a way may be regarded as historical even though none of the specific incidents it recounts or personalities it introduces have any basis in fact. Into this category fall the romances which depict the general background of American life, such books as Horatio Colony's *FREE FORESTER* (Little, Brown), a novel of pioneer Kentucky, in which the lusty, brawling life of

that period is set forth with vim and meticulous adherence to truth, Elizabeth Madox Brown's *THE GREAT MEADOW* (Viking), another saga of pioneering which carries its characters from Virginia into Kentucky, Christopher Ward's *THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF JONATHAN DREW* (Simon & Schuster), an animated and veracious chronicle of the journeyings of a youth in that great trek which carried New England to the Middle West, and a dozen other books of similar sort. Here while the backdrop is drawn with a strict regard for the faithfulness of the portrayal, episode and characters are purely imaginative. Then there is that other literature—on which I shall focus in the following lists—which introduces into its narrative actual events and personalities. The line of demarcation between the two is frequently shadowy, and perhaps the distinction I am drawing is a non-existent one; at any rate it attempts to establish a difference between the novels which center on definite episodes of the national history and those which have to do with broad general movements.

To go back to the beginnings and Columbus. There is a novel by James Fenimore Cooper, neglected as are the greater part of his tales outside of the sea stories

*No. 2 in a series of excerpts from the novel of Elizabeth's most fascinating courtier.*

"She could swear in a voice remarkably like her father's, she could bark out her orders, or croon a light endearment, she could, if need were, make her voice a trumpet call to arms. But the voice in which she repeated 'Brightnefs falls from the air' was one that few had ever heard."

*Elizabeth the Queen is talking to Sir Walter Raleigh in NORA LOFTS' beautifully written historical romance . . .*



# HERE WAS A MAN

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and the Leatherstocking Tales, which takes the first voyage to America of the Discoverer as its theme. *MERCEDES OF CASTILE* is one of the minor works of its author and the interest it possesses is almost entirely that of its subject. Still, since romances of the sort are not numerous, F. L. S. might note this for the early period together with Mary Johnston's *ADMIRAL OF THE OCEAN SEA* (Little, Brown), which builds its plot about the voyages of Columbus, with scenes laid as well at the court of Ferdinand and Isabella. Then, coming along in time, there is Ford Madox Ford's *THE "HALF MOON"* (Doubleday, Doran), a portrayal of the North America of Hudson the Navigator, with cutbacks to English life under James I, and Mary Johnston's *CROATAN* (Little, Brown), an account of the voyage from Plymouth and the settlement in Croatan in Raleigh's time. Mary Johnston is one of those authors whose works fall into that half land between romance with a historical background and historical romance of which I was talking before. Her tales of early Virginia, once immensely popular and still read—*TO HAVE AND TO HOLD*, *PRISONERS OF HOPE*, *AUDREY* (all Houghton Mifflin)—introduce very incidentally figures of the period such as the Byrds and Evelyns, and very vividly the customs and society of the time. The Englishman, David Garnett, some few years ago published a novel which took its title from its heroine, *POCOHONTAS* (Knopf), and which while rather wooden as fiction was a careful building up of background. Mr. Garnett, having sedulously combed literature for the facts of his story, and having studied the map carefully for its setting, came over to the United States after his novel was written to check up on his portrayal. The book has striking scenes and makes a careful attempt to discriminate between fact and legend. For the time of the French and Indian Wars there is Cooper again with *THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS*, which plays about the Lake George-Fort William Henry region, and Grace Zaring Stone's *COLD JOURNEY* (Morrow), a tale of the Deerfield Massacre and of the journey of the inhabitants of the ill-fated town to Quebec.

And now we have reached the first great watershed of American history—the Revolutionary War. As might be expected there is a plethora of books, and as might be expected my space runs out as I reach them. More next time.

# The Compleat Collector

RARE BOOKS: CONDUCTED BY JOHN T. WINTERICH

*In alternate weeks this Department is devoted to Fine Printing and is conducted by Carl Purington Rollins*

## Among the Catalogues

**M**ONEY is not the only Castoria for which public and institutional libraries cry. They like shelfage, and when they have enough of it they tenderly shelter every bookseller's catalogue that comes their way. Lacking such linear abundance as heart might desire, they preserve only such catalogues as manifest in ponderable degree the skill and intelligence of a merchant seeking a market for his wares among a clientèle which, he may be pardoned for hoping, is itself not utterly lacking in those attributes.

The specialty catalogue, if soundly specialized, distills these essences in quantity sufficient to give them a longer lease of life than is vouchsafed the catch-as-catch-can compilations. It is a pleasure to present here a group of eminently preservable catalogues from among the first fall offerings of New York dealers—catalogues, it need hardly be added, as well worth retention by the individual collector as by the librarian.

Collectors' Bookshop of 37 West 47th Street, New York, offers 147 "First Books by American Authors" in a catalogue that is amply buttressed with readable and bibliographically important notes. The number of contemporary writers whose fame is rooted in prose but who blossomed initially and untimely in verse is significant of something or other. Some of these tentative thrusts are familiar—Morley's "The Eighth Sin" (\$175), Miss Cather's "April Twilights" (\$60), Hemingway's "Three Stories & Ten Poems" (\$125), Mencken's "Ventures into Verse" (\$150, presentation), Santayana's "Sonnets" (two copies, variant bindings, \$25). Others, however, are at least moderate surprises to the incognoscenti—Ring Lardner's "Bib Ballads" (\$12.50), Meredith Nicholson's "Short Flights" (\$8), Martha Ostenso's "A Far Land" (\$3), Elizabeth Madox Roberts's "Under the Tree" (\$7.50), Evelyn Scott's "Precipitations" (\$6.50), and William Allen White's

"Poems by Two Friends" (\$20, presentation copy from Mr. White's collaborator, Albert Bigelow Paine). And by way of rule-proving exception, there is a poet who began his career with a novel: Sidney Lanier and "Tiger-Lilies" (\$32.50).

Dauber & Pine of 66 Fifth Avenue offer a 1553-item catalogue, "The Confederacy," based on the collection of the late Jay Zorn—a striking instance of one man's devotion to a cause that is far from lost bibliographically. Here are 18 lots under Jefferson Davis, 29 under Stonewall Jackson, and 51 under Robert E. Lee. The collection is particularly rich in Southern poetry (370 items).

"First Editions of Juvenile Fiction 1814-1924," issued by the Scribner Book Store, 597 Fifth Avenue, lists, in addition to several familiar titles, 13 Horatio Alger entries, earliest and costliest of which is "Bertha's Christmas Vision" (1856, \$8.50), seven Harry Castlemons, 16 Edward S. Ellises, nine G. A. Hentys, nine Elijah Kelloggs, and 11 Kirk Munroes, among them "The Flamingo Feather" (1887, \$27.50). The presence of Charles E. Carryl's "The Admiral's Caravan" (1892, \$22.50) accents the absence and the rarity of "Davy and the Goblin." A big majority of the 333 lots are priced at under five dollars each, but a high average is established by the inclusion of a copy of "Huckleberry Finn" in first edition, inscribed nineteen years later, but still worth \$1,000.

Maurice Inman of 620 Fifth Avenue issues a catalogue devoted entirely to titles (not necessarily in first edition) based on the Grolier Club list of one hundred books famous in English literature (including the American) and A. Edward Newton's schedule of one hundred good novels.

Alfred W. Paine of 113 East 55th Street presents his twelfth catalogue of books relating to salt water with only five titles listed under "Bounty." One- and two-dollar lots are numerous among the 423 citations, which are by no means confined to first or early editions—one section is devoted to the best new books on the sea.

From the new house of Retz and Storm of 598 Madison Avenue issues Catalogue Number One which, while more varied in content than any of the others here listed, merits inclusion both by way of being different and because this department has a partiality for Catalogues Number One. The 150 entries extend from Thomas Bailey Aldrich to William Butler Yeats and include American and English literature, Americana, and autograph letters, particularly of presidents of the United States. A business letter of Andrew Jackson written June 6, 1845, two days before his death, is priced at \$250.

Philip C. Duschnes's Catalogue 22, issued from the top floor of 507 Fifth Avenue, is an excellent cosmogony of American and English first editions and fine press books. Particularly appealing is the special code word: "Recovery."

## A. EDWARD NEWTON

### Bibliography and pseudo-Bibliography

(Rosenbach Lectures, 1936)

The book collecting "game" with some of the absurdities of bibliomania, the fun to be had with book catalogues, and a discussion of essayists, particularly Montaigne and Lamb—in Dr. Newton's inimitable style.

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