



G. W. CUNNINGHAM

General Advertising manager; in charge of the Sears Roebuck catalogue.

(Sears doesn't frown on necking) but—and this is a great deal more important to Sears—they have "swivel-cases." The china of toilet seats is "fired at a volcanic temperature."

In Eden, there is not much time for reading; whether because the Edeners are too tired or too sociable is not clear. But the reading list, which is only three pages long, begins with 1937 best sellers: "Gone with the Wind," "Anthony Adverse," "Man the Unknown," "Around the World in Eleven Years," "Edgar Guest Special," "American Psychology," and "White Banners." Children read "Black Beauty" and also "Moby Dick." Zane Grey, Grace Hill, and Gene Stratton-Porter are present as reprints. This much is in the small top half of a page; another page gives the truer picture: Handbooks on etiquette, manners, dancing, tap dancing, jokes, party games, recitations, public speaking and letter writing, plus the new Hoyle, Bibles, Thesauruses, synonym dictionaries. There is "The Modern Home Physician," "Sane Sex Life," "Dr. Dafoe's Handbook for Mothers," and "The Lazy Colon"—books of action, not books of escape.

Health and happiness not without information but without thought—this is Eden. Yet the art of the moment in America owes much to the spirit of Sears' Eden. It owes Honk the Moose and American Gothic. It owes not only such cautious prophets as Phil Stong and Grant Wood and John Curry, but such incautious rebels against Eden as Vardis Fisher. For a man cannot be a rebel except at home. New York is the serpent in Sears' garden; and when Eden is wiser—and it will be wiser—it is going to be a lot sadder. Let us, then, with Mrs. Fred Sparrow, send in our down-payment and let someone else do the brooding; the easy payment will be upon us soon enough.

Lovell Thompson is on the staff of Houghton Mifflin Co.

Young Poet's Novel

THE FRIENDLY TREE. By Cecil Day Lewis. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1937. \$2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

OF the young English triumvirate of poets, Mr. C. Day Lewis is accounted the least, though he is spokesman for their theories. W. H. Auden is acclaimed for his peculiar and uneven dramas as well as for his poems *en masse*, and Stephen Spender is cheered on for brilliant (if effete) short stories as well as for the purely lyrical strain. Meanwhile, Mr. Lewis has gone ahead writing in his own way; and in the opinion of this reviewer he is developing just as rapidly as Auden or Spender. He never writes nearly as badly as Auden sometimes does. He seems to have more wisdom than Spender. He hasn't the fireworks of either of the others, but he can do a good job of writing. I think he has done one in this novel, for the most part.

Four young people are concerned in it: Anna and Stephen, Evelyn and Richard. The awakening of Anna is described with a quite remarkably subtle understanding of the emotions of a young girl. The other characters are real, as is Anna's father and the more stuffy members of the English rural school community. I should have left the book without the epilogue, the third part, called "Steve." For the major part of the book is Anna's story. One likes Steve, one does not find him overpoweringly wonderful, but one understands why Anna loved him. He is an entirely modern young man, a questioner of all established things, but honest and with charm. He and Anna are thwarted by the fact that he can't get a job as yet—and some of their young and modern talk is naturally enough about their being victims of the economic system. But whether he knows it or not,



CECIL DAY LEWIS

what young Mr. Lewis has done for 244 pages of this book is to give the modern prototype of the growth of young love as it was well seen of George Meredith in his own day.

I don't object to the epilogue because of disagreeable features. I do not need "happy endings." But what I do object to is an author suddenly stirring up new complications, because he probably thought he had been getting too sappy—complications so very faintly foreshadowed in the main story that they aren't quite credible. And I object to the priggish self-righteousness of turning Evelyn and Richard Crane into barren symbols. It makes me like and sympathize with the Cranes a lot and feel that they have been shabbily treated.

Yet the epilogue shows that when Mr. Lewis learns a little more about organizing a complicated novel he will do most interesting work. As it is he has written a fine and sensitive love story.

Citizen of the Sea

CRUISE OF THE CONRAD. By Alan Villiers. Illustrated. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1937. \$3.75.

Reviewed by HASSOLDT DAVIS

ALAN VILLIERS is as much, and as little, a "citizen of the sea" as Conrad or Masefield or Tomlinson; his heart is in oceans, right enough, but it must forever return to the landman's ink where adventures can be refined and valued.

Villiers sailed 57,000 miles around the world in a square rigger, the last existing frigate, his own ship, with a crew of lads averaging twenty years of age. There was no particular point to the voyage and no profit other than the adventures of hardship and beauty among far lands. They visited what is left of Bali, and sailed to the savage islands in and neighboring the Sulu Sea. They carried gold prospectors to Samarai, met many isolated traders who were missionaries in the finest sense, and missionaries who were traders. (The number of the heathen was growing in the Solomons!) They fought south through treacherous reefs and weather to Sydney, north of Tahiti, then around the Horn on the journey home.

This makes exhilarating reading for the greater part, but there are doldrums in it. It is the story of a ship apostrophized, and one wishes that there were more men and less canvas mentioned, that less of it seemed a transcription from the log. But Alan Villiers writes splendidly always, and most modestly for one who had the courage to take an ancient frigate manned by schoolboys around the world. Such a ship will never sail again, and to lovers of the sea this book will be welcome. It is illustrated with sixty of the author's magnificent photographs, probably the best ship- and seascapes being made today.

The BOWLING GREEN by Christopher Morley

Sonnet in a Knothole

WE idled at our doings, heart and I.
 We watched the puddle lose its glaze of frost,
 Measured the April in a pale March sky
 And saw the birch-tree root all newly mossed.
 Filling our fingernails with spring, we raked
 And burned and swept, and breathed, and chopped some wood;
 And even in that easiness, heart ached
 To keep this noon forever, if we could.

But no one guessed (we made no outward stopping)
 The sudden woodsman stroke that we incurred
 When down through fibre, grain, and knotted wit
 The oak of language shivered, cleanly split
 By the flashed axe-blade of the perfect word.
 We tightened steel to helve, and went on chopping.

Small Wares

(AND AN IRON RESIDUE)

I've been looking at some photographs (in that always exciting quarterly *The Colophon*) of the sanctums of eminent book collectors. And I'm amused again at their museum look, their housemaid neatness. Damn it, those fellows aren't collectors, they're interior decorators. Clean-swept desks, deep rugs, a few choice bric-a-bracs each in the exact spot . . . one even has some empty space on his shelves. (Incredible!) What do they do with all the precious and heavenly oddities, minutiae, small wares (excellent department-store term) that flock around the humbler collector? And each of these as delightful in its way as a perfect First. Is it possible that these lads only cherish the things that have been collated, certified, appraised, by some one else? What do they do with association treasures of their own?

Damn it all, I've been wanting for a long time to say something about this room (whose picture will not get into print). I dare say you'd think it ugly, but dogs and cats love it (every new animal makes straight for it; Blythe says it's the "masculine smell") and as for the rats: you should hear them antic-hay in the wall behind the shelves. I thought when I built the Knothole that this older room would settle down into austere decorum; but the habits of years are too strong for it.

A genuine collector never has any space, no matter how he contrive.

But I really want to know: I appeal for information: what do these well-bred aesthetes do with all the adorable trivia of life that are so dear to numbskulls like me? I'll take one shelf at random: here is a précis of o's d'a that have collected along it, in front of the books.

(1.) A complicated little gadget, in a leather folder, for reaming, coring and probing a pipe. I never use things of that sort, they make life more difficult still, but this was given me by that polished man-about-books Mr. Eddie Ziegler and I cherish it as a symbol of his goodness.

(2.) A horse's head, carved in Ivory soap by a daughter.

(3.) The last of half a dozen silver tea-spoons which (with a corkscrew) were the first things I bought at Oxford, at the beginning of Michaelmas term 1910. If you were here and we were talking things over, that would send me down the shelf to R. W. Chapman's *The Portrait of a Scholar* (Oxford Press, 1920) in which there is a delicious essay on Silver Spoons.

Good idea, I'll move the spoon to another shelf, where it can stay right in front of Chapman's book.

(4.) A terracotta egg-cup, with Indian designs, from Valparaiso. Too precious to eat eggs from (this household has had bad luck with many favorite egg-cups), it is useful to hold paper-clips.

—Among the few things I've ever thought seriously of collecting are egg-cups. I've had them of china, and wood, and even pewter, but they always disappear. What became of that little beauty from Mt. Saint Michel, with a picture of the abbey? Then the family brought me a charming one from a convent in Quebec, with a pewter ornament, which washed off. But when I am very old, and life settles down, I shall go in for egg-cups, range them delicately in a cabinet, and have them photographed for *The Colophon*.

(5.) Tait McKenzie's fine medallion of Walt Whitman, done for the Franklin Inn Club (of Philly) at Walt's centennial in 1919.—This fronts a thick rich collection of miscellaneous postal cards, which deserve the bibliographic study for which

literature is too brief. I shuffle through them and put foremost the picture of one of America's most beautiful fireplaces, which is at "Charlesgift," Maryland, the seat of Hulbert Footner, Esq., and birth-place of Mme. Storey, my favorite female detective.—As it is late, and dusting this shelf has made me thirsty, I shall do the unusual: open the new bottle of Cutty Sark and drink a solitary toast to Mme. Storey, whose new book is about to appear. Is it possible to fall in love with a person merely imagined by a friend? How well Mme. Storey and I would have understood each other. And how grimly curious I am about the (perhaps mythical?) M. Storey, who is never mentioned or explained.

(May I remark what a handsome gloss and color these plain cypress shelves have taken in seventeen years; like old violins. It was a bright spring day of 1920 when I first took possession of this room. As a

matter of fact an even earlier occupant was L., then small wares of sixteen months, who spent her first night in this house in a baby carriage right where these shelves now stand. The furniture van broke down on the way from Philadelphia, so that night we slept as best we could. I lay on the dining room floor with the light burning (so the van would find the house if it arrived in middle darkness) and read Conrad's *The Rescue*, then about

to be published. I still remember how pleased I was by one line—*There is no rest for a messenger till the message is delivered.*

(6.) Beyond the postcards is something whose purpose you'd scarcely guess. It's an egg-cosy; but a modernistic egg-cosy (looks like a conical carnival-hat) which I regard as symbolic of much. To change the Supreme Court is trivial compared to altering the traditional idea of a Suffolk egg-cosy.

(7.) Tortoise-shell spectacles; a spare, in case of emergency; specially esteemed for scratches on the lens, which came from the bottom of the swimming pool of M.S. *Santa Maria en voyage* to South America. Do not, no matter what stimu-

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"DAS FREMDE KRAUT NICOTIANA"
 SEBIZIUS: STRASSBURG, 1579