

her two well-known earlier poems "The Factories" and "The Strong Ones" are two of the best sociological poems ever written in this country. Yet, because she also has a decidedly sentimental vein, people confuse her merely with ribbons and red roses. All of Margaret Widemer's poetry is founded on personally experienced emotion, and sometimes the emotion overflows too conspicuously. At other times it is held within bounds and a memorable poem results, like her "Re-visitants." Now we have "Hill Garden" (Farrar & Rinehart, \$2). Margaret Widemer has had much happiness in life and a way of imparting it through her verse. But there is the other side too. This is nowhere better illustrated than by an effective poem in the present book called "Fortune."

It should be obvious that Miss Widemer's method has certain Celtic affiliations, and (in spite of what Mr. Guiterman has said of the great Gaels!) there is a mortal simplicity in much good Irish verse. The greatest of us all, William Butler Yeats, does not disdain it. I am actually sick to death of obscure *nuance*! I hope the new revolutionary poets, for instance, will eventually come out of the dark closet of modernism, which is getting to smell distinctly of cheese, and, like Roland in the doubtful pass, sound a great blast upon the slughorn.

Katherine Garrison Chapin is a poet who in the last few years has steadily forged to the front. Though traditional in her method, she expresses her own personality and writes in a variety of rhythms. "Time Has No Shadow" (Dodd, Mead, \$2) is a thoughtful, well-written book.

It is extremely difficult to write of one deeply loved who is dead, and of the peculiar assurance one retains concerning that person. But I think Katherine Chapin has succeeded in "Strange Evidence," and particularly in "With Long Remembered Light." These are sincerely poignant poems with no touch of bathos. Throughout the book one is in touch with a person of fine integrity. I like her handling, technically speaking, of a rather long irregular line with interior rhythms, easy, almost conversational in its graceful flow. She can write also with concision. Her poem on the Indians, "Voice of this Land," her feeling for the atmosphere of the seasons and of far lands is also noteworthy. Here I have only space to quote one of her poems drawn from her knowledge and appreciation of painting and sculpture. It concerns Brancusi's remarkable

#### BIRD IN SPACE

*This shall be forever flying, never  
alighting,*

*Forever rising, never curving or lying  
Out on the wind.*

*Into space rising, and crying.*

*O words,*

*Be as this smooth, hard, polished marble,  
extending*

*Into the space of the mind; not ending  
Here with the voice.*

*As the edge of stone, bending*

*The arc of light in an unplotted curve,*

*Where no wings swerve,*

*Beyond the space of birds,*

*Rise, O words!*

# The New Books

## Biography

**THE TORRINGTON DIARIES.** By John Byng, later Fifth Viscount Torrington. Edited by C. Bruyn Andrews. Vol. III. Holt. 1936.

Rather than bear the ills of London, once again John Byng flew to others he knew not of. "Honorably inquisitive," he sought rapid rivers and steep woods in the North Country and around Snowden's snow-capp'd peak, failing to find full pleasure in either because "the levelling system prevailed and overturned all distinction." Insolence and incivility characterized an order of less distinction, provoking on one occasion a red-blooded Tory roar, "Oh what a dog-hole is Manchester!"

The time was out of joint, the traveller lonely—sufficient causes, both of them, to make John Byng's tours of 1792-93 the less rewarding to himself and to the readers of his diaries. Freshness of viewpoint and enthusiasm for travel, so characteristic of the earlier tours, have faded into the repetitious ranting of a die-hard. Epitaphs and sketching, "the little things" which delighted him formerly, failed to woo the holiday traveller from a preoccupation with the inconveniences and incivilities of country inns. Not until the end of the Welsh Tour and the end of "a decent pint of port wine, with no head ache following," did John Byng admit defeat:

May it serve to warn posterity from  
a love of rambling, and may it instruct  
them to keep (*quietly if they can*) at  
home.

E. G. B.

## Fiction

**UNCHARTED.** By Webb Waldron. Grey-stone. 1936. \$2.50.

It seems too soon to be recommending

good hammock fiction, but there are also winter cruises and southern beaches. For these special needs Mr. Waldron has fashioned his new novel, according to a design as simple and as successful as ever. You take a passenger steamer stopping over at an island, somewhere in blue waters. Upon the steamer you must have a queer and promising assortment of characters, such as a hard-bitten, romantic captain, a divorcee looking for her past, an archeologist looking for lost worlds and his beautiful daughter looking for Life, a wild, reckless crew, and somebody to keep wondering if anything is going to happen. To these you add strange natives speaking their poetic tongue, an inscrutable Master of the Island, old ruins at the top of a cliff, an earthquake—, but the possibilities are already apparent. Mr. Waldron handles these things surely, keeping his plot moving around unexpected corners and his action innocent of reflection. The result is a diverting narrative, meant precisely for the hour that needs to be whiled away.

N. L. R.

**THE SNARE OF THE FOWLER.** By Gerald Bullett. Knopf. 1936. \$2.50.

Not one but two novels are present in this new book of Mr. Bullett's: the central story and also a tiny fragment of a novel written by twelve-year-old Judith, the heroine's daughter. But it is sad that there is so much of the one and so little of the other, for it is the fragment that is completely charming. Mr. Bullett has chosen to present in modern dress the theme of Oedipus—a theme unsympathetic to modern readers as Mr. Bullett knows, for it is with some defiance that he explains that coincidence plays no more part in his version than in that of Sophocles. And so artificial is the story that the passages which move toward the

# The Criminal Record

## The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
CANDIDATE FOR MURDER Mortimer Post (Crime Club: \$2.)	College faculty and relatives decimated by slick killer who finally succumbs to coterie of scientists and Italo-Irish cop.	Campus - cum - laboratory flavor a bit cloying at times but mixture of vitamins, hormones, and deadly distillations is generally satisfying.	Good Puzzler
OMIT FLOWERS Stuart Palmer (Crime Club: \$2.)	Hopeful kin gathered at palazzo of diabolical recluse see his funeral pyre and one scion expire ere another quells killings.	Trepidatious atmosphere, lively dialogue, swift movement, and vivid characterizations effectively screen rather well-worn mystery story gambit.	Well done
IN MEMORY OF MURDER Dean Hawkins (Crime Club: \$2.)	Restless wraith of 20-year-old slaying leads to 5 more murders in Southern town before local lawyer lays ghost.	Well nigh faultless puzzle with a "tis him! 'taint him!" ending that sets the old bean whirling.	Mag- nifique!

dénouement are stiff and unconvincing and the great scenes usually melodrama. Each incident is of itself conceivable, but the sum is "a little intellectual bag of tricks" as the hero calls himself.

Here is the story: Drusilla is raped at twelve, producing before she is thirteen a child which her mother and Dr. Hewish assure her is stillborn. When she is thirty-four and a distinguished actress, young Robert Cordwainer, who is twenty-one and has always been sure he is not the son of Tom Cordwainer, his alleged father, falls in love with her. It is not until they have long been married and three children have been born to them that Robert accidentally runs down an old man and from a hint on his dying lips discovers that he has killed his father and married his mother.

This plot is perhaps complex enough, but Mr. Bullett has further complicated it. Dr. Hewish, Drusilla's deliverer, becomes her step-father; and even Robert's foster-father leaves his wife and takes the name of his new woman so that the reader is almost as confused as the unfortunate Robert whose children are his siblings.

Mr. Bullett writes very well indeed. But in this book, he seems to have bitten off more than it interested him to chew, so that it is when he escapes, not when he embraces Sophocles, that the charm of his own kind of writing has its way.

K. S.

## Science

*FRONTIERS OF SCIENCE.* By Carl Trueblood Chase. Van Nostrand. 1936. \$3.75.

Because no answer has yet come to the foremost and the largest question in the entire realm of science—the question "what is life?"—it is at present customary to divide science into two broad categories, the physical sciences and the biological sciences; psychology and its allies in the eyes of most men of science occupy borderline positions under the second group. There are two camps with regard to the nature of life, the mechanists and the vitalists. The mechanists believe all science ultimately will turn out to fall in the physical category while the vitalists, a minority (though minorities in the scientific world are not submerged) hold that life is something over and above mechanism—something which always will require its own unique category. Many of the vitalists are mystics. Neither side can prove itself right or the other side wrong.

The author of this review of general science covers both categories in a broad sweep; the macrocosm—astrophysics, relativity, the expanding universe and those perplexing cosmic rays; the microcosm—fundamental particles such as electrons, positrons, neutrons and protons; the life sciences—biochemistry, biophysics, vitamins, glands, health, and, finally, the old unanswered question concerning the origin of life. Mr. Chase's book is a selection of the Scientific Book Club and deservedly so; it is a book from which the average intelligent reader may glean the main current of advancing science.

A. E. I.

# The Compleat Collector

FINE PRINTING: CONDUCTED BY CARL PURINGTON ROLLINS

*In alternate weeks this Department is devoted to Rare Books and is conducted by John T. Winterich*

## Briefs

**A**MONG the current shows which may be of interest to readers of this column are: "Little Things," that is, minor pieces of printing, at the Lakeside Galleries, Chicago; Baskervilles, with many in fine binding, at the Yale University Library; Renaissance Book-bindings at the Grolier Club. \*\*\* Good-speed's catalogue of books of New England interest based on Van Wyck Brook's recent book is one of the best arranged and finely printed book catalogues I have seen for a long time. \*\*\* *Typography*, the new British quarterly, gives promise of interest and some reasonable degree of sanity. \*\*\* The Fifty Books Show is in process of assembly, and with all due respect to previous juries (on which I have served!), the present one is expected to produce a better show than ever. \*\*\* The Mergenthaler Linotype Company has issued a book in commemoration of fifty years of the linotype, with the story told by Thomas Drier and decorations by W. A. Dwiggins.

## Various Books

"William Morris as I Knew Him" (Dodd, Mead, \$1.50) is a reprint in book form of Bernard Shaw's introduction to volume II of the supplementary volumes on Morris edited by his daughter and published earlier this year in London. The present reprint is inadequate as to printing, but the essay, as I said when reviewing the first appearance, is a very fine personal tribute.

"Printing Papers," by William Bond Wheelwright (University of Chicago Press, \$2). It is unfortunate that in preparing this book the author went no farther than to assemble the contributions he had made to *Paper and Printing Digest*, because while the facts are here in great number and what seems to be great accuracy, the presentation is broken up and things are not in their places. Ancient history and modern sales talk, both good in themselves, play tag with each other through the book!

In spite of all this, the work has many merits. It does tell a lot about paper making in theory, history, and practice; it has a good many pictures of the operations of paper making; and it has an index. In many ways it is the best American handbook on paper which has appeared, and that makes it all the more distressing that the material could not be arranged more logically.

The Columbiad Club of Connecticut has just issued "The Specimen Books of Binny and Ronaldson in Facsimile." The specimens included are the 1809 and 1812 books of the Philadelphia firm, which are either unique or excessively rare now. There are also reproductions of several other early type efforts of American designers. A short historical introduction has been provided, the reproductions are by the collotype process, and the letter

press in actual Binny & Ronaldson type.

Nicholas Breton's "Arbor of Amorous Devices" of 1597, and Sir Thomas Overbury's "Characters" of 1614 and later, come to me in pleasant forms. The "Arbor" has been reproduced in facsimile from the unique complete copy in the Huntington Library, with an introduction by Hyder E. Rollins. It has been well printed in general, but the paper is too hard (the besetting sin of American reproductions) and the grain runs the wrong way in the letter press section. These are small matters—and vital in the making of a good book.

And the other book, printed at the Shakespeare Head Press, curiously and irritatingly enough is also printed with the grain the wrong way! But once over that hurdle, the book is excellent. It is small, easily handled, has the text of all the "Characters," has ample notes, an index, and facsimiles of title pages of the early editions. It is the latest of the Percy Reprints, published by Blackwell of Oxford, a well designed set of books.

*CUPID'S HORN BOOK: Songs and Ballads of Marriage and Cuckoldry.* Mt. Vernon: The Blue-behinded Ape. 1936.

Here is a book in which the typography challenges attention because of its fitness to the text—and while this volume has not the exact fitness of style which characterizes the same publishers' "Immoral Anthology," it is nevertheless extremely good. The quality of the workmanship is beyond reproach—typesetting and press work—while the illustrations by Richard Floethe are competent grotesques. Some of the verse is good, some not so good, but its interest does not lie in its form.

## HARPER Prize Novel Contest

**M**anuscripts may now be submitted for the Harper Prize Novel Contest. The final date for submission is February 1st, 1937. A circular giving full details of the contest will be mailed free on request.

HARPER & BROTHERS  
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