

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

THE TUDOR WENCH. By Elswyth Thane. Harcourt, Brace.

DARLING OF MISFORTUNE. By Richard Lockridge. Appleton-Century.

MAN'S ROUGH ROAD. By A. G. Keller. Stokes.

Early Louisiana

"Will you kindly send me," writes A. D. G. of Somerset, Mass., "a list of books, fiction and non-fiction, about Louisiana and the territory along the lower Mississippi during the French rule."

THE American Historical Society issues a three volume HISTORY OF LOUISIANA, by H. E. Chambers, and there is a source work, published by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, which is full of first-hand material. This is THE OFFICIAL LETTER BOOKS OF W. C. C. CLAIBORNE, a work in no less than six volumes, covering the years 1801 to 1816. A brief history, which may suffice to meet the needs of A. D. G., is Phelps's LOUISIANA (Houghton Mifflin), and an even shorter one, THE STORY OF LOUISIANA (Bobbs-Merrill), by W. O. Scroggs. G. W. Cable's THE GRANDISSIMES (Scribners) is, of course, the classic in fiction of the period of the Louisiana Purchase; another tale, also well known, PHILIP NOLAN'S FRIENDS (Little, Brown), by Edward Everett Hale, sets its scene at the same time.

Oxford Tales

Several persons have written in to repair the omission of the name of Compton Mackenzie's "Sinister Street" from the list of novels on Oxford University asked for by J. D. H. of Gulfport, Miss. Two other books have also been suggested—J. S. Childer's "Laurel and Straw" and Logan Pearsall Smith's "The Youth of Parnassus and Other Stories."

Wells and Wells Cathedral

D. McC. of Decatur, Ill., asks for a list of books on related subjects—the history of the town of Wells in Somerset, England; the biography of Thomas Ken, Bishop of Bath and Wells in the seventeenth century; Wells cathedral, and the Parliamentary Wars in Somerset and Devon and other Western counties.

There are undoubtedly histories of the city of Wells to be had, but they are probably difficult to secure in this country. Histories of Somerset, however, which contain pages on the cathedral town are easy to get. That indispensable reference work for English places, the ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA, would be a good thing to consult by way of introduction to volumes such as A. C. O. Hann's SOMERSET (Macmillan), Clive Rouse's THE OLD TOWNS OF ENGLAND (Scrib-

ners), E. Hutton's HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS IN SOMERSET (Macmillan), and J. A. Robinson's SOMERSET HISTORICAL ESSAYS (Oxford University Press). Nor should D. McC. forget that Baedeker contains valuable historical sketches of cities of any importance and that the information it presents on Wells, if concise and concentrated, is authoritative. As to Wells cathedral Baedeker, of course, is a detailed guide to that. For general narrative accounts there are CATHEDRAL CHURCHES OF ENGLAND (Macmillan), by A. H. Thompson, Van Rensselaer's ENGLISH CATHEDRALS (Appleton-Century), and Foord's WELLS, GLASTONBURY, AND CLEEVE (London: Dent).

Bishop Ken, friend of Izaak Walton and author of two of the most widely popular hymns in England, "Awake, my soul" and "Glory to Thee, my God, this night," has a column of notice in the BRITANNICA and an entry, of course, in the DICTIONARY OF NATIONAL BIOGRAPHY. There is a LIFE OF THOMAS KEN, in two volumes, by Dean Plimptre, out of print it appears. As to the Parliamentary Wars of which Somerset as well as Devon and other Western counties were the scene THE CAMBRIDGE MODERN HISTORY is an excellent work to turn to for a bird's-eye view. If, however,

D. McC. wants to go into the subject more thoroughly there are two famous works she can consult, Gardiner's HISTORY OF THE GREAT CIVIL WAR (Longmans, Green) and George Macaulay Trevelyan's ENGLAND UNDER THE STUARTS (Putnam).

Greek Word Lists

B. D. of New York City, who has several times come to my aid when questions to the Clearing House prove particularly recondite, now proffers a request of his own. He writes:

"In one of my Greek text-books—I recollect it as being a text of some author, furnished with unusually full appendices, but it may have been a grammar—there was a number of word-lists, in which fifty or more related words were grouped under the root, with a few cognates in English and Latin. Under the root ANG, bend, for instance, were the Latin *angulus*, a corner, and *ancus*, a servant (one who crouches), the English *ankle*, and *angle*, a fish-hook, and some fifty Greek words, spread out over as wide a territory of ideas as these four, yet all having the idea of a bend or crook. I threw away my text-books like a born fool (and like some one whose teachers, and designers of text-book format, had neither of them done anything to inspire him with affection for them); but now that I feel my Greek beginning to slip, I would give a great deal to have those lists again."

Can any one help B. D. to recover the title of his old text book?

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"If you are in need of a good laugh or even a few chuckles, read 'The Autobiography of a Scientist,' preferably aloud."—J. J. Brooks in *Bios*.

"Ten laughingly laudable lectures. . . . Consistently satirical, the 'Autobiography' is, however, never scathing nor bitter. This unknown author sends his shafts swiftly, but always good-naturedly blunts their points."—Carl E. Zimmerer in the *South Bend Tribune*.

"To those who appreciate subtle wit and more or less deadly satire, this book is recommended."—Portland (Me.) *Evening Express*.

"A devastating satire that cannot fail to arouse continuous chuckles in anyone even slightly acquainted with the ponderous solemnity of some modern pronouncements in the name of science. Read it and laugh."—*The Hartford Daily Times*.

"A long time in coming but it had to come sooner or later. . . . For one who has wearily read through many pages of scientific twaddle . . . the 'Autobiography of a Scientist' will be like a breath of fresh air."—*San Antonio Express*.

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She Sells Sea-Shells

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE WORKS OF EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY. By Karl Yost. With an essay in appreciation by Harold Lewis Cook. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1937. \$3.50.

MISS MILLAY first escaped into print, in the happy location of the seventeenth-century errata slip, by way of St. Nicholas and the *Megunticook*, her high-school paper in Camden, Maine. Her progress has been a schedule of prize contests. At fourteen she was a gold medalist in the St. Nicholas League, that superb repository of juvenile talent, and at seventeen her contribution was awarded a cash prize, which gave her almost a professional status. In 1912 she contributed "Renaissance" to "The Lyric Year"—Mr. Yost displays an unaccountable reticence in withholding the names of the prize winners; they are available in the spring, 1936, issue of the *Colophon*. Then, in 1923, came the Pulitzer prize.

Mr. Yost contributes to the terminology of bibliography one designation that merits official acceptance. Miss Millay has been peculiarly the victim of the limitlessness of limited editions. Her more recent books have been issued in three forms, one regular and two irregular. Of the latter, one is made available in an edition of five hundred or so copies numbered and signed, and the other is made unavailable in an edition of say thirty-six copies on Japan vellum, also numbered and signed. Mr. Yost denominates this last involvement an ultra-limited edition. Happy phrase for an unhappy condition! The best interests of neither book-collecting nor publishing are served by this deliberate exploitation of rarity at the source.

The Yost-Cook bibliography (published, praise heaven, in one format only) is itself a Millay first, thanks to its inclusion of a charming foreword by its subject which it is a pleasure to reproduce here (making this issue of the *S.R.L.*, incidentally, a left-handed Millay item with this first periodical appearance):

I have been asked to write a foreword to this bibliography, a work whose good fortune I truly desire, but the nature of whose value or interest to anybody I do not understand. As for myself, I am a collector of sea-shells. I live in the strong though ebbing hope of finding some day on a briefly uncovered sand-bar a right-handed Left-Handed Whelk; or even, some day, after propitious foul weather, of digging out of the beach under the jealous eyes of hundreds who dare not quite attack me and wrest it from me, a perfect Junonia. The very thought of the words "*Conus gloria-maris, Hwass*" fills me with an ecstasy of longing and despair. But the sight of the words "matchless copy of Hookes' *Amanda*, with both blank leaves G5 and H" leaves me unaffected. However, as I said, to this bibliography and to its

compiler and to its readers, I wish good fortune. As a maniac in one department, I salute the maniacs in another: may sweet Insanity forever charm our days.

Bookseller Turns Critic

THIS BOOK COLLECTING RACKET. By Harry W. Schwartz. With a Foreword by Paul Jordan-Smith. Chicago: Normandie House. 1937. \$3.

Mr. Schwartz is a Milwaukee bookseller who has instilled a true enthusiasm for collecting in his clientele. Many a New York dealer must be jealous of his opportunity and his isolation. But Mr. Schwartz did not find the opportunity—he created it and developed it. Booksellers everywhere might take a leaf from his book.

But not from this book. "This Book Collecting Racket" is a one-volume reprint and amplification of brochures that have previously appeared in small pamphlet editions. The contents are an odd compound of reflection, experience, con-

clusion-jumping, surmise, criticism, assumption, marginalia, and rewrite. Mr. Schwartz's approach may be satisfactorily measured by this extract from his preface:

After it [the first part of the earlier treatise] was submitted to several magazines I learned that although the editors, as individuals, liked it, the article could not be published. At first I was surprised, but when I discussed it with several editors I learned how naive I had been. (In justice I wish to say that the *New Masses Magazine* had accepted several articles but being pressed for space at the time, the editors returned them.) I was not surprised later to find publishers as hostile to my MS as the magazines had been.

This suggestion of the hush-hush in bibliophily will be startling intelligence to most of its adherents, who would rejoice to see it elevated to such a pitch of importance in the social and cultural scheme that it became news, even if suppressive news.

Most, if not all, of what Mr. Schwartz intends to be damning asseverations have been made before, and some of them are not particularly damning. The title is highly misleading, though certainly not intentionally. The average bookman, be he collector or dealer, will react to it much as if he had picked up a declared copy of "Secrets of the Nunnery" and found within the text of "Little Women."

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
THE THIRD EYE <i>Ethel Lina White</i> (Harpers: \$2.)	Young English physical-instructress gets goods on conniving house-mistress and narrowly escapes exit from existence.	Hard to excel as study in malevolence, fear, and lurking horror—with sufficient sentiment and sundry flashes of fun.	Fine!
THE ALMOST PERFECT MURDER <i>Hulbert Footner</i> (Lippincott: \$2.)	Pages from the Case Book of Madame Storey. Junoesque woman detective who has her own tricky methods of solving crimes.	Bit too much on melodramatic side at times but five long episodes contain much action and some clever deducing.	Capable
FILE ON RUFUS RAY (Crimefile No. 2) <i>Helen Reilly</i> (Morrow: \$1.95.)	Divorce lawyer with many enemies shot on Third Ave. New York Homicide Squad finds six suspects, one murderer.	Photostats of police reports, facsimiles of evidence provide trimmings for better-than-average story. (P. S.—We guessed it.)	Recommended
ABOUT THE MURDER OF A MAN AFRAID OF WOMEN <i>Anthony Abbot</i> (Farrar & Rinehart: \$2.)	Greenwich Village slaying of misogynist living extra double life presents T. Colt with intricate and baffling problem.	Dope, a lady's nightie, frustrated young love, family skeletons, adept deducing all lead to familiar, but surprising, solution.	Good job
THE UPSIDE DOWN MURDERS <i>Hugh Austin</i> (Crime Club: \$2.)	Murders in amusement park baffle all solvers until P. D. Quint proceeds crabwise and smashes some cast-iron alibis.	Vivid and convincing picture of "concession" life, extra-well characterized, concluding with some eyebrow-lifting data on fingerprints.	First rate
MURDER IN THE W. P. A. <i>Alexander Williams</i> (McBride: \$2.)	Arrogant N. Y. head of govt. bureau strangled as sit-downers riot. Lieut. Tonelli and Machiavellian Izzy Jones solve it.	Undercurrents of fascistic terror-organization, continuous excitement, and bunch of hard-fisted, vigorously amusing characters.	Par