

# The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
<b>THE GLASS SLIPPER</b> <i>Mignon G. Eberhart</i> (Crime Club: \$2.)	Chicago nurse marries Dr. whose dead wife was her "case." Poison rumors rise and death strikes while assorted detectives snoop.	Good mystery over-diluted with sentiment—which many may enjoy. No lack of suspense, and finish sets pulse a-racing.	Satisfactory
<b>CHALLENGE TO THE READER</b> <i>Editor: Ellery Queen</i> (Stokes: \$2.)	25 shorts by famous mystographers, with authors' names omitted and sleuths renamed for guessing purposes.	All good stories, and some new to anthologies. Idea ingenious, and—sop to reader—not too hard to guess.	Enjoyable
<b>THE DEATH SYNDICATE</b> <i>Judson P. Philips</i> (Washburn: \$2.)	Super-diabolical N. Y. gang busted by girl whose play-boy ex-hubby gave her detective agency. He helps considerably.	So swiftly paced and action-packed that reader overlooks improbabilities, impossibilities, and melodramatic preposterousness.	A-1 thriller
<b>THE WHISPERING EAR</b> <i>Clyde B. Clason</i> (Crime Club: \$2.)	Revengeful twin of successful author poisoned in Hollywood. Writer's ex-wife also dies. Prof. Theocritus Westborough eruditely unravels curious tangle.	Slightly indigestible combination of California cultism and toxicology—with some good moments, and an ending that is very puzzling indeed.	Uneven
<b>THREE BRIGHT PEBBLES</b> <i>Leslie Ford</i> (Farrar & Rinehart: \$2.)	Scion on lavish Md. estate gets arrow through neck, another murdered before local talent spots killer.	Slightly implausible set-up counterbalanced by excellent characterizations, action, verve, and wit.	Good reading
<b>BANBURY BOG</b> <i>Phoebe Atwood Taylor</i> (Norton: \$2.)	Proper quota of likely suspects, not too completely concealed (or believable) killer, some quaint Cape Codders, and Asey functioning effortlessly.	Baker-benefactor of Weesit accused of distributing poisoned tarts. Asey Mayo clears him and pierces dense fog to find double slayer.	Satisfactory

## Life Up North

**ARCTIC JOURNEYS.** By Edward Shackleton. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1938. \$3.50.

**THE CAPTAIN'S CHAIR.** By Robert Flaherty. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1938. \$2.50.

Reviewed by MARIE AHNICHTO PEARY

IT is difficult for me to give an unbiased opinion of Mr. Shackleton's volume. For those in search of adventures, the book may perhaps seem disappointing. But, as my father and Stefansson have both pointed out, adventures in the field of exploration are a mark of inefficiency. "Arctic Journeys" is an intensely interesting story of youth, eager, earnest, scientifically trained.

The expedition it describes, sponsored by Oxford University and the Royal Geographical Society, was composed of men whose previous work had been in the tropics. The average age of its members was twenty-three. Instead of the rashness, recklessness, and grave mistakes which would seem to be the logical results of so much youth and inexperience, the book is a record of clear-headedness, good sportsmanship, and no small amount of scientific accomplishment.

The party remained in Greenland a year, with headquarters at Etah. Their objective was the exploration, mapping, and geological study of the little known interior of Ellesmere Land. The story is told with humor and enthusiasm and will be a joy to all those interested in the Arctic, its traditions and its development.

"The Captain's Chair" was frankly a disappointment. Perhaps a knowledge of the very real and important achievements of Mr. Flaherty led one to expect too much. The first-hand accounts of the Eskimos, their customs and their beliefs, are interesting but not outstanding. So, too, with the stories of the captains of the Hudson's Bay Company's supply ships.

Possibly the author's plan for the book changed after the work was well under way. For there are several chapters in the beginning devoted to the story of the mysterious islands far out in the sea; native legends concerning them; and finally, the determination to search for them. And then—no more. Yet Mr. Flaherty did eventually discover these islands and add them to the chart. His account of this discovery would be of more interest and importance than the slight stories which comprise "The Captain's Chair."



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### SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 241)

R. BRIDGES—TESTAMENT  
OF BEAUTY

Verily if Hope were not itself a happiness

Sorrow would far outweigh our mortal joy, but Hope

Incarnate in the blood kindleth its hues no less

With every breath, to flood all the sluices of life

Long as the heart can beat.

# The New Books

## Biography

**THE POETICAL CAREER OF ALEXANDER POPE.** By Robert Kilburn Root. Princeton University Press. 1938. \$2.50.

One finds in this book the root and stalk, but not quite the flower, of literary scholarship. The scope of the work is historical and critical. Historically it is excellent—accurate, well-proportioned, "sound." After first giving an analysis of neo-classical principles and the nature of the heroic couplet, Dean Root proceeds to a moderately detailed discussion of the main periods of the career of Pope and the works relating to each. He blares forth no important new discoveries, but by redefining issues and redistributing emphases he quietly adds to our knowledge of Pope. Particularly useful are the chapters on the couplet and on Pope as translator.

"In every work regard the writer's end," saith Pope. We suspect that Dean Root's main "end" was to write a good old-fashioned piece of historical scholarship. Yet a preface also avows his intention of furnishing an "interpretation and fresh appraisal . . . of Pope's art." In this aspect of his work he is less happy. In fact he says very little about the art of Pope. His page is so fretted with names, dates, titles, and line references that there is scant space for the author's own opinions. We learn what Swift thought and what Johnson said, but not often enough what Root thinks. This book is factually strong but critically undistinguished. It is in effect a good, a very good, handbook on Pope.

A. C.

## Fiction

**YOUNG DOCTOR GALAHAD.** By Elizabeth Seifert. Dodd, Mead. 1938. \$2.50.

This novel is the happy winner of an annual \$10,000 prize. The reviewing of a prize novel is always a more or less ticklish business. The very fact that it has been adjudged worth a large sum of money is likely to arouse in the envious reviewer a *show-me* attitude that may well convert a tolerant commentator into a bristling critic. So let us admit at once that while to our mind, this is only a fairly interesting story, no better and no worse than dozens the women's magazines publish each year, it may be a far greater masterpiece than we recognize.

Anthony McNaill, nicknamed half-decisively, half-tenderly Doctor Galahad, is a handsome and idealistic young Canadian, "with a little blue blood thrown in," who comes to a small Missouri town as assistant resident in a privately owned hospital. He falls afoul of jealous, back-biting doctors, gossiping old maids, small town snobs, and sex in the form of the community's semi-respectable fast girl. When all seems lost, he is reestablished by his masterful work with the child victims of a school-bus accident, finds himself unexpectedly married to the daughter of the inevitably crooked banker, and we leave him as he is about to launch a scheme for cooperative medical service.

Now there is not a thing wrong with this story except the obviousness of its plot pattern, and that the characters are types rather than people, and types we have met again and again. Darcey, the mid-western town, is certainly more dispiritingly vulgar than any community this reviewer has ever met in the flesh, but only in the degree of its unpleasantness does it differ from dozens that followed "Main Street." Nevertheless to the large audience whose interest in the medical profession seems to be insatiable, Mrs. Seifert's first-hand knowledge of hospital wards, operating rooms, and the back-

stage manners of doctors, will carry the story. And there may still be readers who find in the injection of abortions and syphilis into a novel an indication of its originality.

In justice to author and judges it should be added that the contest was limited to first novels. That does make a difference.

M. S. U.

**THE NOISE OF THEIR WINGS.** By MacKinlay Kantor. Coward-McCann. 1938. \$2.50.

Admirers of MacKinlay Kantor at his best—in "The Voice of Bugle Ann," for instance—are bound to be disappointed by this present novel, which, throughout most of its length, has the style with little of the thrill of a routine thriller, and in other parts is marred by a cloudy poeti-

**"I should place it  
among the best of  
the Walpole novels"**

**—FOREST REID, *The Spectator*, London**



## THE JOYFUL DELANEYS by Hugh Walpole

**"An intelligent and happy book...thoroughly readable and thoroughly likeable." says the *New York Times Book Review*.**

**\$2.50**

**DOUBLEDAY, DORAN**