

# The New Books

## Drama

**THE BEST ONE-ACT PLAYS OF 1939.** Edited by Margaret Mayorga. Dodd, Mead. 1940. 389 pp. \$2.50.

One-act plays are those brief dramas which are always to be, but never are, produced. They are, however, frequently published; the present is the third in a series of "best" volumes edited by Miss Mayorga and uniform in format with the rather more important "Best Play" series edited by Burns Mantle. Miss Mayorga's material is, on the whole, not so rewarding as Mr. Mantle's and, since there is little check either by counter-opinion or audience reaction, her selection is more subject to whim. In the present volume her taste ranges widely, and so does the quality of the short plays.

She starts off well with Archibald MacLeish's "Air Raid," and an admirable and extremely playable comedy by Lynn Riggs called "A World Elsewhere." After that, the catholicity of her choice baffles summary. There is a crisp little vaudeville skit called "That's Hollywood," by Florence Ryerson and Colin Clements; a folk whimsy by E. P. Conkle, who has done much better; a tiny item by William Saroyan, who has seldom done worse; a solid slice of Channing Pollock, and a very effective short verse play by William Rose Benét. A laboriously nonsensical farce by John Kirkpatrick rubs shoulders with a vivid, grim little scene by Seyril Schochen.

R. L.

## Fiction

**THERE ARE BROTHERS.** By Fanny Heaslip Lea. Dodd, Mead. 1940. 306 pp. \$2.

As everyone has to have a sense of humor, so everyone has to understand New England. Fanny Heaslip Lea's New England, like that of Eugene O'Neill, is an intense, narrow, passionate, bigoted family group. Each member has a secret which motivates his entire life. Unfortunately, in Miss

Lea's book, every other member of the family knows what it is, and twits him with it daily, reducing all these potential tragedies to the level of adolescent bickering.

A fresh interest comes into the Blount family life with the arrival of a brand new secret. Mart, the most nearly normal of the Blounts, has married Sally, who has a child by a previous marriage. No Blount can rest until he has found out all about her. One could expect the revelation that the child's father is a sadist to be the climax of the book. But no: what Sally most wants to conceal is the fact that she had a still earlier husband. Her reason for this concealment is not that she should be thought to be over-married, but that her first husband, who was a famous British novelist, should seem to outshine Mart. Sally's agonized fear that the sinister second husband may take the child from her might be expected to dominate the book; actually, it is eclipsed by Sally's worry over what the family will say. May, the plump, vindictive wife of the elder brother, is the central figure, Sally was meant to be. But she is so petty and dull that Sally's obsession with her and small triumphs over her destroy Sally's own interest for the reader.

K. S.

## International

**SCANDINAVIA. The Background for Neutrality.** By Alma Luise Olson. Lippincott. 1940. 358 pp., with index. \$2.50.

More than eight hundred years ago three Scandinavian kings met alone on an island and decided that their countries should live in peace and good will. They did not sign a treaty or make a pact, but sealed their friendship by shaking hands.

All through the centuries there has been a bond of friendship among the Scandinavian countries, despite historical upheavals and changes. Out of its cultural kinship the New North developed its love for peace, or, politically speaking, its neutrality, the nature of which is analyzed exhaustively in Miss Olson's book. The histories of Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, and Finland are viewed and examined separately in five rich chapters. Their social and political problems are discussed and traced back to ancient sources; their achievements in science and industry are evaluated. Legendary figures of the Viking period as well as modern heroes like Ibsen, Kierkegaard, or Strindberg are brought to life and shown as part of Scandinavia's cultural affinity.

Miss Olson knows the North thoroughly. She has traveled through the whole of Scandinavia, and some of her short, descriptive passages are of great beauty. Throughout the book one feels the author's strong attach-

ment to Scandinavia, whose people, history, and literature she has studied with a keen interest. Her objectivity in relating and examining facts is worthy of mention.

M. H.

## Miscellaneous

**HARVEST AT STILLMEADOW.** By Gladys Taber. Little, Brown. 1940. 256 pp., with index. \$1.75.

Mrs. Taber's brisk, staccato, urban book appears a few months after Muriel Follett's "New England Year." Mrs. Taber lives in Connecticut, raises cocker spaniels, sends her daughter to a summer camp, and writes, for the *Ladies' Home Journal*, "A Diary of Domesticity," which has been telescoped into this entertaining year-round chronicle. Mrs. Follett helps run a Vermont farm, has fewer literary allusions at the tip of her tongue, and her boy and girl are members of the local 4-H clubs. Nevertheless, Mrs. Follett should meet Mrs. Taber. They have a number of interests in common, and can exchange recipes.

In case the reader experiences some natural difficulty in distinguishing the cockers from the casseroles, the book has a brief but useful index. G, for instance, stands for Garden, Gardenias, Garlic, Goulash, Greens, and Guests (Planning ahead for). There is trouble ahead for Mrs. Taber, if her book has the sale it deserves, and a fresh Gagger of uninvited Guests descends on her to sample the Goulash. Author and illustrator have combined to make Stillmeadow seem a distinctly alluring place.

E. F. W.

**SOUTHWARD HO!** By William La Varre. Doubleday, Doran. 1940. 301 pp. \$3.

This is undoubtedly one of the thinnest contributions to synthetic adventure that it has been this reviewer's misfortune to encounter to date. Mr. La Varre writes with the same lack of imagination that he apparently uses in mapping out his travel itineraries; his preoccupation with the obvious is equalled only by his blindness to the actual lives of the people he encounters. In this particular volume he deals with various sections in and about Central America, contributing nothing to the literature, romantic or factual, already existent about these places. Worse, the book is inaccurate. Mr. La Varre devotes an entire chapter to the banana plantations of Guatemala where he visited for ten days. It must have been a confusing ten days, for Mr. La Varre refers in his book to the "mountain plantations." There are no mountain plantations devoted to bananas in Guatemala, unless Mr. La Varre considers a few hundred feet above sea level mountainous country.

Adventure, they say, is where you find it. It is highly doubtful, however, that anyone will find it in "Southward Ho!"

J. H. S.

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**GHOSTS OF LONDON.** By H. V. Morton. Dodd, Mead. 1940. 197 pp. \$3.

It has been said that there can be found in London people who wear, as the ordinary uniform of their calling, the clothes of every reign since that of Henry VIII, who is himself represented by beefeaters and bishops. The statement seems extravagant, and we have never seen it documented, but such survivals are the "ghosts" of Mr. Morton's title, and he has found some that go back far earlier than Henry VIII. Think of children collecting pennies for a grotto, on Saint James's Day, since the days of the pilgrimages to Saint James of Compostella, or of a rental of horse-shoe nails that goes back to the time of the Templars, and is paid for a parcel of land whose location has been forgotten! Mr. Morton, who is known for his travel books, has traveled about London, looking for ancient customs, and talking with lamp-lighters and curfew-ringers (not to be confused with the College Youths who keep up the art of change-ringing), with pursuivants and Huguenot weavers and hansom cabbies and publicans who deal in eye-lotion because the public-house once had a famous well, and has made his findings into a pleasant book. Sometimes one wishes for more information; there were many readers who found Miss Dorothy Sayers's "The Nine Tailors" tantalizing in giving so much and no more of the technique of change-ringing, yet there is more of it in the parentheses of that novel than in the two chapters Mr. Morton gives to the subject. And it is a pity that in telling of the ceremony of the King's Keys in the Tower of London, he does not mention the one night in history when the sovereign's name was not used in the reply to the challenge—the night of Queen Victoria's death, when no one knew if they were "King Edward's Keys" or, as his mother had wished, "King Albert Edward's Keys." But he has found many excellent old customs, such as beating the bounds to impress them on parish boys, and scourging with nettles all those who on the twenty-ninth of May do not wear a spray of Royal Oak in honor of the Restoration of King Charles II, customs which ought to be more widely kept up. The only thing one would quarrel with is the title. Surely these

are very hale ghosts, and long after Hitler is a wraith hunting Berchtesgaden, the Spirit of London will go on walking in flesh and blood.

B. D.

### Miscellaneous

**FORTY-EIGHT MILLION HORSES.** By Humphry B. Neill. Lippincott. 1940. 242 pp. \$2.50.

This is a capsular, swift-running account of the forty-eight million horsepower of energy now absorbed by these United States. It has the excited tempo of the newsman's rendering of technical progress and is meant to arouse and excite the general reader to the blessings he can and does enjoy. Its scope is as wide as the uses of electricity, from giant power-house dynamos to midget radio tubes, from farm to hospital. As based mainly on information from the General Electric Co., the account is in some places invidious; a chapter on Tele-magic without mention of the telephone; the scantiest mention of the Westinghouse Co. and its products. As styled for those who run and read, it is mainly superficial, a survey of unemployment and stabilization of employment as dependent on the trade cycle's being accomplished without a single reference to the banking system. But it is handsomely produced with ample illustrations and admirably paced for its purpose.

J. R.

### Music

**ELIZABETHAN MUSIC AND MUSICAL CRITICISM.** By Morrison Comegys Boyd. University of Pennsylvania Press. 1940. 363 pp., with index. \$3.50.

The vital and truly significant problems posed by the Elizabethan period in music are, unfortunately, scarcely implied, and their solutions certainly brought very little nearer, by this volume of Professor Boyd's. It professes, it is true, to be little more than a compilation of writings dealing with various aspects of Elizabethan musical culture presented by contemporaries, but the consideration of any specifically musical problems without a critical basis founded upon the music itself is, at best, a dubious undertaking. Particularly is this true of any investigation of the Elizabethan period, which is characterized by a musical culture founded on the most direct contact with the music itself. Professor Boyd's chapter on the Madrigals, for instance, is little more than a register of composers, with occasionally one of his personal criticisms, always superficial, often irrelevant, and deriving from no ascertainable critical basis. The chapter on Musical Theorists presents digests of the works of these men, without for a moment posing the critical problem of the discrepancy between theory and practice. Certainly Morley's well known treatise, taking but

one example, bears very little relation to the musical practice of his time.

The ultimate value of this volume probably resides in its convenience as a reference book, and in its collection of writings on music gathered from sources not specifically musical in nature. This latter virtue may indeed make it quite valuable in the hands of an investigator who is willing to employ these sources as a means to a more vital end.

M. B. B.

**A SMATTERING OF IGNORANCE.** By Oscar Levant. Doubleday, Doran. 1940. 267 pp. \$2.

The first chapter of this collection of essays is as good a popular description of the methods, personalities, and careers of the leading orchestral maestri as you are likely to come across. It is highly recommended to concert-goers who would like to know why Koussevitzky, Stokowski, and Toscanini often get such different results from the same scores, as well as to those who like good musical anecdotes. The rest of the book consists mainly of autobiographical fragments—even the long chapters on Harpo Marx and George Gershwin are largely autobiographical—and whether or not you like them is a matter of personal taste. What with the popularity of Mr. Levant as the musical "expert" of "Information, Please," it should not be difficult for most readers to know in advance whether "A Smattering of Ignorance" is likely to be their piece of meat.

S. G.

### Psychology

**WE CALL IT HUMAN NATURE.** By Paul Grabbe, worked out in co-operation with Gardner Murphy. Harpers. 1940. 120 pp. \$2.

This book is described on the jacket as "a pictorial approach to psychology and what it means to you." Mr. Grabbe supplies about half of the contents of the book: a series of photographs, cartoons, and diagrams, while Professor Murphy of Columbia supplies the other half: an interlarded, concise epitome of elementary psychology. The text is clear, discriminating, and precise, and considering the limitations

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it sets itself, very good. The main limitation is its drastic brevity, a brevity which limits its contents to definitions and the barest explanatory exemplifications and arguments. Presumably the pictures are intended to make up for this and to provide a compensatory fulness.

The comparison which comes to mind most readily is the Russian example of a simple illustrated primer, such as M. Ilin's book on timepieces. But Mr. Grabbe's pictures are different. The photographs are arresting, many of them esthetically exciting, with the emotional appeal that is implicit in fine studies of children, landscapes, and clouds, and "action." The cartoons are well drawn and often amusing. The diagrams do not come off so well. They are not always easy to understand immediately, and the symbols employed are sometimes clumsy. Indeed the diagrams definitely fall below many that are current in standard textbooks. The general impression made by the pictures, more particularly the photographs, is that they do not serve to supplement the text, but rather to provide an accessory pleasure and as in advertising copy, an essentially irrelevant stimulation. Indeed, little of the intellectual content or clarity of the book would be sacrificed if the photographs and cartoons were omitted. As in advertisements, they provide a "kick."

Whether Pierian spring water should be spiked with gin is a matter of individual tolerance and taste. To this reviewer the visual esthetic excitement is distracting. The popular presentations of science in Benn's Sixpenny Library Series, and in the "Culture Moderne" series of the Librairie Stock cover the same field and are not devoid of esthetic appeal, but their appeal is the "functional" one that comes from the essential interest of the subject matter and a good expository style.

B. D. L.

#### ANSWERS TO QUIZ NO. 8

1. Mr. Creakle, in "David Copperfield," by Dickens.
2. Mr. Parkhill, in "The Education of Hyman Kaplan," by Leonard Q. Ross.
3. Ichabod Crane, in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," by Washington Irving.
4. Dr. Pangloss, in "Candide," by Voltaire.
5. Mr. Chipping, in "Good-bye, Mr. Chips," by James Hilton.
6. Mr. Squeers, in "Nicholas Nickleby," by Dickens.
7. M. Hamel, in "The Last Lesson," by Alphonse Daudet.
8. Mr. Dobbin, in "Tom Sawyer," by Mark Twain.
9. The Old Roman, in "The Varmint," and other books by Owen Johnson.
10. Barbara Pinkerton, in "Vanity Fair," by Thackeray.

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## Double-Crostics: No. 311

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

1-F	2-E	3-U	4-H		5-T	6-I	7-B	8-X	9-C	10-V	11-Q	12-Y	13-N	14-G		15-S
16-G	17-H		18-Z	19-P	20-W	21-M	22-T	23-V	24-D	25-G	26-L	27-R		28-A	29-I	30-S
31-U		32-Q	33-W	34-X	35-V	36-M		37-G	38-F		39-R	40-Q	41-Z	42-G	43-U	
44-C	45-D	46-Y		47-T	48-E	49-Y	50-Z		51-O	52-N	53-A	54-B	55-H		56-R	57-S
58-I		59-N	60-M	61-Y	62-T	63-O	64-B	65-L	66-E	67-F	68-D		69-A	70-S	71-F	72-D
	73-L	74-I	75-C	76-M	77-E		78-C	79-I	80-B		81-L	82-K	83-Z	84-D	85-J	
86-Z	87-T	88-E	89-N		90-F	91-N	92-M	93-U		94-I	95-U		96-M	97-P	98-B	99-I
100-E		101-U		102-L	103-Q	104-F	105-J	106-M	107-A		108-I		109-P	110-F	111-G	112-H
	113-K		114-Y	115-L	116-F	117-K	118-O	119-S	120-H		121-J	122-R		123-W	124-M	125-S
126-C		127-W	128-E	129-A	130-Y	131-P	132-U	133-D	134-F		135-P	136-A	137-V	138-K	139-D	140-X
	141-D		142-R	143-Q	144-Y	145-N	146-B		147-X	148-C	149-I		150-A	151-N	152-E	153-K
154-M		155-Y	156-U		157-X	158-Y	159-J	160-K	161-S		162-B	163-X	164-F	165-G	166-K	
167-R	168-I		169-J	170-W	171-O	172-P	173-T	174-L	175-Z	176-B	177-V	178-G	179-X	180-S		

## DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1938 edition).

The solution of last week's Double Crostic will be found on page 21 of this issue.

## DEFINITIONS

- A. Perverse.  
B. Game birds.  
C. Favorite wife of Mahommed.  
D. Cloudy, obscure.  
E. Chivalrous.  
F. Pentateuch (3 wds.).  
G. Facing toward axis of growth.  
H. Donkey.  
I. Origin; source.  
J. Standard Greek.  
K. Inventor of pastoral poetry.  
L. Indubitable.  
M. U. S. east coast island.  
N. Canadian poet (born in England 1874).  
O. Russian first name.  
P. Not at all.  
Q. Earthy and impure iron ore.  
R. Repeated dull thud (comp.)  
S. Resounding music (Bib.)  
T. Avoided by artifice.  
U. Netlike.  
V. English hymnologist (1674-1748).  
W. Efflux.  
X. Reverberating.  
Y. Collection of 14th century tales.  
Z. Piquant.

## WORDS

28	150	129	69	136	53	107
98	7	80	162	146	176	64 54
44	9	75	126	148	78	
45	133	24	141	72	139	84 68
77	88	48	152	2	66	128 100
71	164	1	38	90	104	110 134 67 116
178	16	37	165	25	111	42 14
4	120	17	112	55		
74	29	94	6	58	168	108 79 99 149
105	121	85	159	169		
166	113	82	153	160	138	117
65	73	81	26	174	115	102
96	60	21	124	92	154	36 76 106
89	52	13	145	151	59	91
63	51	118	171			
135	19	109	131	172	97	
40	32	11	103	143		
27	122	39	56	167	142	
57	70	119	161	15	125	30 180
5	47	87	22	173	62	
95	3	43	101	156	132	93 31
10	23	177	137	35		
170	20	123	127	33		
8	163	157	179	34	140	147
46	12	49	144	114	158	130 155 61
86	41	175	83	18	50	