

# Gruesome Hall

THE CRIME OF LAURA SARELLE.  
By Joseph Shearing. New York:  
Smith & Durrell. 1941. 309 pp. \$2.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

I WOULD take Sally Benson's word for it that the sinister novels of Joseph Shearing are generally "tops." Anyone who writes as well as does Mrs. Benson should know. I think, however, that "The Crime of Laura Sarelle" must be one of Mr. Shearing's less remarkable efforts.

It is full of atmosphere. Leppard Hall, the old Warwickshire place, however, impresses me more by its dullness through the first half of the book than by the charnel quality that is constantly alluded to but never quite made impressive.

The room was as "old-fashioned"—that was the term Mr. Mostyn used in his mind [*And why not?—Reviewer*—as the rest of the house. Heavy pieces of furniture, inlaid and

finely finished, dark pictures of the last century (no portraits here, but fruit pieces and landscapes again such as he had in his own room), a rich marble chimney piece, great blue vases of Rockingham china, painted with bunches of roses and carnations, chairs covered with that dark-yellow satin.

The book, at first, is a good deal like that room. You feel you are dealing with a minor Wilkie Collins or Sheridan Le Fanu. Laura Sarelle is beautiful and young, has a horrible dull snob for a brother, called of all things, Theodosius; falls in love early on with his steward named Lucius—a high-spirited Irish scion—is betrothed to the dullish Harry Mostyn, after Lucius leaves the scene; and doesn't do anything in particular for the first half of the book except complain, and once fall into the river. Lucius makes faint efforts to find out what the true story is back of a fine old portrait of an earlier Laura Sarelle dressed in primrose silk, an ancestress whose ancient costume the young living one borrowed to do her nose-dive in. There is some scandal of which the old family portrait is a symbol, but no one will tell him just what it is.

Then the living Laura acquires a distillery, which isn't what you think it is, but a closet next to her room

where she can distil perfumes from flowers. Why was the closet originally fitted up like that and to what uses was it put? Down at the *Bear and Ragged Staff* in the village there's a handsome whip in a glass case over the mantelpiece that belonged to a certain Captain Avershaw who was hanged back in the eighteenth century. Lucius Delaunay had run into him in his researches, and Harry Mostyn now learns about him. What he discovers worries him, but then Laura's fortune is a hundred thousand pounds! (Incidentally I like a vicar being named Mist and a body-servant named Flasket!) From these hints you get the general building toward what happens later. After about page 180 a great deal happens. The old crime of Leppard Hall is revealed. The living Laura Sarelle gets her bright idea. This is the best part of the book. Though one easily foresees what is going to happen, the description of the tragedy is really moving; and at last the ghastly influence of the dead is really felt by the reader.

It is obvious that Mr. Shearing is an author with a keen sense of the dramatic, not to say the melodramatic, and one of those crime writers you should keep within reach on your reserve shelf. Some day this reviewer hopes to read his best books.

A hurricane...  
a murder...  
and...

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## THE CRIME OF

*Laura Sarelle*

BY JOSEPH SHEARING

## The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, and Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
JASON BURR'S FIRST CASE <i>David Kent</i> (Random House: \$2.)	Stabbing of museum chief with artifact and two subsequent slayings cleared up by gruff ex-reporter sleuth.	Archaeological patter novel and interesting. Brusque operative Burr after badly handicapped start does good deducing job.	Grade A
MURDER WELL DONE <i>Ione Sandburg Shriver</i> (Farrar & Rinehart: \$2.)	Penniless bride of heir to millions runs into hatred and triple murder at Mich. family estate. Lieut. Grady investigates.	Tangled and tragic events of unhappy honeymoon vividly portrayed. Action swift, and sleuthing admirable, with copious clues around for observant puzzlers.	A No. 1
THE SHARKSKIN BOOK <i>Harry Stephen Keeler</i> (Dutton: \$2.)	Pathologist, under police persuasion, confesses to murder he didn't commit. Subsequent discoveries check with "confession." He has terrible time.	Highly flavored Keeler mixture of decayed corpses, tough hombres, Chinese aphorisms, deplorable dialogue, and what have you.	Passing strange
THE PURPLE ONION MYSTERY <i>H. Ashbrook</i> (Coward-McCann: \$2.)	Shooting of N. Y. Publisher's secretary hands Spike Tracy trickiest job in his ebullient career.	Copious action and much amusing dialogue. Spike, tho' still unpredictable, shows real talent for painstaking deduction.	Pleasant
THE BLACK CURTAIN <i>Cornell Woolrich</i> (Simon & Schuster: \$2.)	Hapless amnesiac discovers he is wanted for unremembered double murder. He trails himself beautifully.	Brilliant variation on reasonably familiar theme. No lack of thrills, emotion and suspense.	Spine-tingler

## THE NEW BOOKS

(Continued from page 16)

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M. S. U.

### Travel

**HERE'S TO CANADA!** By Dorothy Duncan. Harpers. 1941. 334 pp. and index. \$3.

The Dominion of Canada is probably more tourist-minded at the moment than at any other time in its history. Official invitations, posters, leaflets, and advertisements in many American periodicals featuring Prime Minister Mackenzie King and his dog—all these are part of Canada's defense program. The flow of travellers northward provides an invaluable source of American dollars with which Canada can purchase airplanes, machine tools, raw materials, and other necessities of war. This comprehensive travel book ought to offer a special stimulus to Americans planning their summer vacation and looking for a chance to get \$1.10 change for every American \$1.00 bill. So far as this reviewer knows, it is the most complete and up-to-date guidebook to Canada now available.

Miss Duncan, an American-born woman married to a Canadian, knows

her Canada at first hand, for she gives many interesting and often amusing accounts of her travels across the continent. Each of the nine Provinces, as well as the Arctic territories, receives a separate chapter of discussion and description. There are detailed lists of highway, railroad, ship, and airplane routes; specialty shops; and books, pamphlets, and travel offices from which further information can be obtained. The text, which contains an unusual amount of historical material and general comments on Canadian life, is supplemented by thirty-two pages of splendid photographs. Only two major defects are immediately apparent; the distinctly inadequate maps, and the absence of any list of hotels and inns.

J. F. G.

**NEVADA: A Guide to the Silver State.** Compiled by Workers of the Writers' Project of the Works Projects Administration. Portland, Ore.: Binfords & Mort. 1940. 315 pp., with index. \$2.50.

Since the days of '49 the Humboldt River country has usually been thought of as a place you had to cross in order to get to California. Because of this unfortunate state of mind, anyone driving to California even today will probably spend what he considers a necessarily dull day or two in Nevada. Having a copy of this guide-book handy might serve to make these days fascinating. Although not so spectacular in scenery or in history as its neighbors east and west, Nevada nevertheless offers plenty of interest in both respects—interest which the motorist, speeding through along U. S. 40, is too likely to miss. This guide-book (combining lengthy introduction, detailed tour-directions, and photographs) continues the work of the other state guide-books, and maintains the high standard of the series. G. R. S.



"My typewriter, Godfrey, I feel a poem coming on."

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# Double-Crostics: No. 377

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

1-R	2-M		3-I	4-E	5-A	6-Y	7-S		8-J	9-D	10-I	11-P	12-X	13-Z	14-Q
15-W	16-L	17-S	18-U	19-G		20-S	21-T	22-J	23-X	24-P	25-U		26-O	27-U	28-Q
	29-W	30-J	31-Y	32-C	33-P	34-K		35-W	36-K	37-A	38-O		39-N	40-V	
41-P	42-D	43-J	44-X	45-W	46-N	47-G	48-S	49-I	50-Z		51-I	52-T	53-E	54-O	
55-E	56-R		57-I	58-R	59-U	60-O	61-M	62-D	63-P	64-G	65-B		66-F	67-Q	
68-U	69-Q	70-Y		71-W	72-I	73-H	74-B	75-X		76-D	77-U	78-H	79-O	80-M	81-C
	82-K	83-A	84-M		85-U	86-I	87-Y	88-T	89-Z	90-W	91-X		92-B	93-E	
94-G	95-A	96-D		97-S	98-F	99-M	100-I	101-R	102-A		103-R	104-E	105-C		106-F
107-K	108-G		109-Z	110-A	111-S	112-P	113-T	114-D	115-B		116-A	117-G	118-X	119-C	120-L
	121-R	122-F		123-P	124-N	125-I	126-T	127-X	128-J		129-E	130-V		131-O	
132-P	133-F	134-B	135-T	136-J	137-Z	138-A		139-M	140-G	141-V	142-L		143-X	144-J	145-U
146-D	147-Q	148-K		149-Y	150-A	151-M	152-J	153-E		154-H	155-I	156-J	157-Z	158-V	
159-Q	160-T	161-X		162-M	163-G		164-L	165-B	166-C	167-G	168-T		169-M	170-K	
171-V		172-I	173-H	174-W	175-Z	176-S	177-A	178-N	179-L	180-T	181-P				

### 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 6 of this issue.

### DEFINITIONS

- Famous old English hunting ballad (2 wds.)
- Mythical island of Calypso (Odyssey).
- Mythical king of Britain from whom London was named.
- Character in *Vanity Fair* killed at Waterloo (last name).
- Ship used by the forces of Hel at Ragnarök (Norse).
- Foster-father of King Arthur (Morte d'Arthur).
- Legal author of *Tenures* (1422-81).
- Accumulate.
- Elaborated or worked to excess.
- Not regarding or noting.
- Assail with withering denunciation.
- First word of "mystery" novel title by Dickens.
- Unretentive.
- Blighted; clipped with shears (poetic sp.)
- Small swamp rabbit.
- Motive, spur.
- Monolith alone or in a circle
- He traveled on 'an arrow given him by Apollo.
- Tangible.
- Author of "Moral Tales" (1801).
- Imitation of work by others (art, lit.)
- Steeped in water or other liquid.
- Querulous in mood.
- Covered or lined with a hard coat.
- Medieval 2-stringed instrument played by plucking.
- Reached across in space or time.

### WORDS

110	83	150	37	138	116	95	177	102	5
165	65	115	74	92	134				
119	32	166	105	81					
9	146	76	42	114	62	96			
104	53	153	55	93	129	4			
122	98	106	66	133					
167	140	94	163	19	108	47	117	64	
78	173	73	154						
49	10	125	172	51	155	100	86	3	57 72
30	43	144	156	136	128	22	152	8	
148	34	36	82	107	170				
142	120	164	179	16					
162	2	99	84	80	151	169	139	61	
39	124	46	178						
26	131	60	38	54	79				
33	181	41	11	112	132	63	123	24	
14	28	67	69	147	159				
103	121	58	101	1	56				
7	97	20	17	48	111				
113	168	135	160	126	180	21	88	52	
59	18	25	68	145	85	27	77		
171	130	40	158	141					
29	15	45	174	90	71	35			
75	91	44	12	118	23	143	127	161	
87	70	149	6	31					
109	157	89	13	50	175	137			

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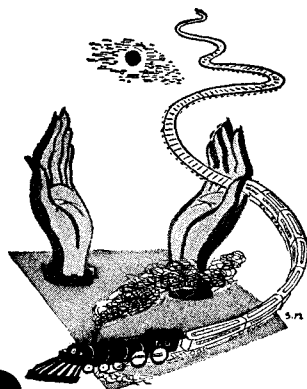
NOVEL - SHORT STORY - VERSE -  
PLAYS - ARTICLES - RADIO SCRIPT -  
JUVENILES - PUBLICATION  
PROBLEMS

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## TRADE WINDS

**M**EET Red. Red is a nice guy and his complete handle is Morris "Red" Rudensky. Red belongs in this column for he is an editor and writer. He gives occasion for a lot of thought and pleasure to his readers and his is one of the very few publications we know that has 100 per cent circulation in the area in which the magazine is published. Red is editor of *The Atlantian*, edited and printed at the United States Penitentiary, Atlanta, Georgia. He wrote to us the other day and wanted to know what we thought of the magazine. Well, we think it good. The entire product is professional in make-up and contents and the editing is discriminating. Yet, it's sad to reflect that many of the boys down in Atlanta get their first chance to become articulate behind prison bars.

A notable achievement in American publishing was recently proclaimed when Random House celebrated the publication of the ten-millionth copy of a Modern Library book. There are few titles, indeed, in this admirable collection which are of minor importance. That the American public will absorb good literature is made evident by its record, in the enormous sales of such titles as "The Iliad," "Tom Jones," "Moby Dick," and "Cities of the Plain." To sell ten million copies of any series of books is a fantastic achievement (we are not forgetting the *Little Blue Books* at five cents), yet Random House has done it and with the sort of titles one is proud to read and have on the library shelf.

Smith & Durrell are following up their "Record Book," which presents a critical survey of classical records, with "The Jazz Record Book"—a reference guide to the record-literature of jazz. Messrs. Smith, Ramsey, Jr., and Russell are doing the book which will include more than 1,000 famous jazz records. They will be listed and analyzed as to soloist, band, period, and style—from jazz's earliest beginnings in New Orleans's Perdido Street and Storyville right through to the Goodman, Miller, and Crosby bands. The book is due in early fall.

Add notes on jazz music. Macmillan is publishing this month W. C. Handy's "Father of the Blues." The "St. Louis Blues" composer is the dean of all "blues" writers and what he has to say should prove of much interest to serious students of this branch of musical composition. Mr. Handy states

that "Southern Negroes accompany themselves on anything from which they can extract a musical sound or rhythmical effect."

Back in 1918, just before they sailed for France, a then unknown author and artist collaborated in a book called "Dere Mable." When they next heard of it, more than a hundred thousand copies had been sold. Before they reached home again "Dere Mable" and its sequel "That's Me All Over, Mable" had sold three-quarters of a million copies. Dodd, Mead, believing there is little difference between the soldier boy of today and the doughboy of the first World War, are going to issue a new edition of these books in a single volume. It would be interesting to see and hear what the boys think about them today.

Out in Chicago, where his Argus Bookshop has won an enviable reputation, Ben Abramson, alert for the unusual, has affixed the following sign to one of the windows of his store: "Buy British Books Bound Between Blitzes." Inside is an interesting exhibition of fine bindings now being executed in Britain under hazardous conditions. To Ben, Britain delivers the goods.

Another recent Batsford-Scribner volume is "Cambridge" (companion to last year's "Oxford"). John Steegman deals admirably with the historical and architectural aspects of the University. The photographs and reproductions of old prints are good enough to be uncomfortably nostalgic for an old Cantabrigian. The author's forthright and witty handling of modern buildings, both town and gown, is welcome, but once in a while his good taste becomes Good Form dyed Old School Tie. For such "social" phases of Cambridge existence as elementary school students (*our* public school), and the women's colleges, Mr. Steegman adopts a tone embarrassing and pointless in 1941. We kept wishing the late Virginia Woolf could answer his remarks upon Girton and Newnham, until we realized that, of course, she has already done so in "A Room of One's Own" (remember the Girton desert of prunes and custard?) and in "Three Guineas." In spite of all this, the Cambridge is definitely a book to have around, and an excellent complement to Mr. Clark's discussions of the arts of the island when the population of England numbered two thousand.

LOUIS GREENFELD.