

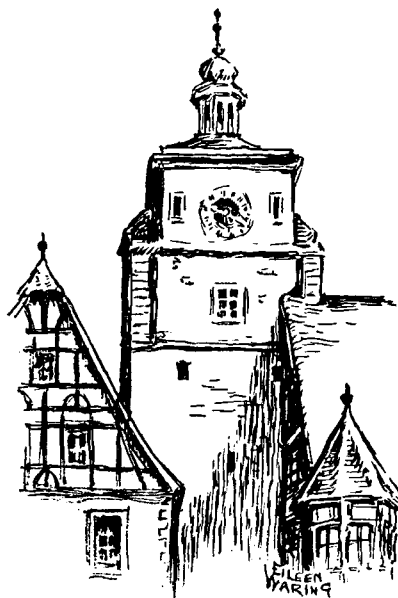
vast quantity of books in short order. His recollections of his earlier years are filled with eccentric and delightful children. There is a solemn boy who spent a whole month slowly tearing his family's old car to pieces, a girl called Bellie who imagined she was a motion-picture queen recently returned from Baghdad with a couple of tigers, and a small boy who wanted to go into the saloon with his father. Several of his characters, including a melancholy and gentle murderer, are too good to be true, until you suspect that they might be fair copies of Mr. Saroyan himself at various stages of his life, always charmed and delighted with everybody.

In our depressing world of wars, terrors, crimes, and assorted wickedness Mr. Saroyan has diligently attempted to prove for a quarter of a century that life is almost unbearably wonderful, that people are instinctively good and above all extremely amusing, and that it is a blessed boon to be poor, especially if one is a writer who does not write for money. And this attitude has its advantages. It is a relief from daily and humdrum cares to absorb his whole "voyald," although a good many of his readers who are not acquainted with his work and his philosophy may discover that there is too much sugar in his recipe.

—HARRISON SMITH.

TV WHEELER-DEALER: The travails of an independent "packager" whose simple ambition it is to become fabulously rich by producing radio and television shows are outlined in Robin Moore's *"Pitchman"* (Coward-McCann, \$3.95). On the subject of such travails Mr. Moore is evidently an unqualified expert. His scarred but unbowed entrepreneur, Benton March, works every possible angle of this most angular branch of show business. He creates (or steals) and "pitches" radio shows, live TV productions, and filmed TV series. He uses every last crumb of family influence, social connection, and trickery that his limping conscience will allow—in the interest of peddling such hot "properties" as "Space Blazers" (science fiction), "The Amazing Dr. Barstow" (medical horrors), and other esthetic nuggets. For his pains March is clobbered by the networks, the advertising agencies, and the big talent agencies in ways that are too devious to be detailed here. Suffice it to say that no form of hucksterish collusion has escaped Mr. Moore's eagle eye—in fact the seamy data compiled in *"Pitchman"* makes other novels of this ilk sound like Mother Goose.

But fascinating as *"Pitchman's"* inside information may be, Mr. Moore



seems to have been a victim of its very richness. There is an absence of characterization, a lack of focus to all the wheeling and dealing which dissipate whatever dramatic impact March's battles should have. This is a great pity, because better novels have been written about the radio-TV dodge on the basis of a fraction of this author's background material.

—MARTIN LEVIN.

GERMAN WOMAN: The first novel of Luise Rinser to be translated into English makes an impressive arrival on the fictional scene. It is entitled *"Nina"* (Regnery, \$3.75) and gives an interesting glimpse into postwar German writing. The novel is a study of the contradictions of the divided heart, unusual because it is a story of adult feeling and choice. In it Miss Rinser returns to a classic theme of German romanticism, man's essential loneliness and unfulfilment. But through her altogether appealing heroine this theme is less forbidding than it sounds.

The story takes place in and around Munich in the Germany of the past twenty years. We are introduced to Nina at a chance meeting with her sister. Then through the several devices of her sister's narration—including letters dating from school and university days, and the diary of a lover, Doctor Stein—we become absorbed in Nina's several unhappy attempts at happiness. Nina conceives of experience as discovering the limits of endurance, while the Doctor, much older than she, lives a withdrawn existence and thrives upon the dissection of the more placid ambiguities. Through Nina, with whom he has fallen in love, he is compelled again and again to approach direct experience, even to an indecisive heroism in the resistance during the

war; but he will not surrender himself to the "absolutes" of life. Ironically, through motives in direct contradiction to Doctor Stein's, Nina finds that she herself must at last make her own refusal of the man she loves.

Miss Rinser is admirable not only for the perception and originality of her theme, but for the way she has turned her back on many of the over-used conventions of the novel. She never descends to cheap effects. Yet it cannot be denied that nobility and high-mindedness are dangerous subjects for a woman. What is it that makes so many feel that long-suffering is attractive in itself? Here Luise Rinser succumbs. Too many of the war incidents are of the stock variety, and in order to prove heroism at these junctures the book becomes an analysis of emotional states and of ideas rather than the presentation of people themselves.

—MARY BARRETT.

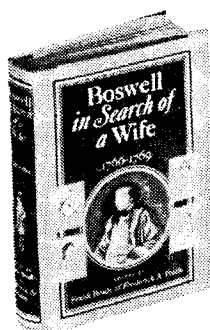
TAP GIRL AT THE MERMAID: From the early American scenes that have been the backgrounds of her previous novels, Shirley Barker turns to Elizabethan England to fulfil a long-nurtured project. In her new novel entitled *"Liza Bowe"* (Random House, \$3.50) the Mermaid Tavern is the focal point, and from this fact springs much of the book's greatest interest. But from this fact also spring some of the book's gravest problems. I fear this novel is more truly about a place and a time than about events—more truly about a constellation of people than about persons. In it Liza Bowe, a tap girl in a Cambridge tavern, seeks to widen her horizons by going to London and taking service at the Mermaid Tavern. The problem there is to keep from being trampled to death by famous names. Quiet Will Shakespeare is there. So is the arrogant Kit Marlow. Nashe, Kyd, and Greene are lesser lights, along with fictitious Philip Fineux, friend of Marlowe and lover of Liza.

This mix has a high caloric content and it requires more than Miss Barker's skills to keep it from being artificial. What we have is a pageant of symbolic personages. But if we surrender to the pageant it is seen to have substantial merits and authentic interest. I don't believe Liza Bowe for one minute, but I accept her as an amiable convention and on those terms positively like her. And why not?—for she leads me into an animated picture gallery of Elizabeth's London, full of color and smell and motion. The figures wearing the masks of great names move persuasively to fulfil Miss Barker's set of conjectures as to how they might have been.

The deepest notes are sounded

Gift Books from Mc Graw-Hill

NOW AT YOUR FAVORITE BOOKSELLER



BOSWELL IN SEARCH OF A WIFE. He's back . . . the 18th century's most dashing swain, most persistent suitor and most literate bon-vivant . . . the irrepressible Mr. Boswell. Here is the fifth and latest, the most entertaining volume yet of his Journals. Edited by Frank Brady & Frederick A. Pottle. \$6.00



IT ALL STARTED WITH EVE. An uninhibited account of the world's most famous women, from Eve and Delilah to Mata Hari. "This generation's funniest prose."—Baltimore Sun. "Armour is the Toynbee of femininity."—Los Angeles Times. With 75 hilarious drawings. By Richard Armour. \$2.75



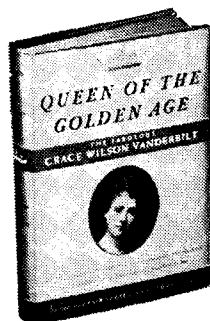
BATTLE HYMN. The inspiring and dramatic true-life story of Dean E. Hess — clergyman turned fighter pilot—who became the savior of thousands of Korean orphans. Illustrated with eight pages of photographs. By Dean E. Hess, Col. U.S.A.F. \$3.95



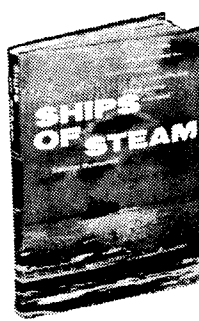
NO EVIL ANGEL. A novel of a strange empire on an island off the rocky coast of Maine . . . the loves and hates that beset it . . . vividly brought to life by this noted New England writer. By Elisabeth Ogilvie, author of "The Dawning of the Day." \$3.95



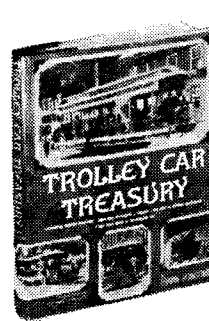
BETTY CROCKER'S NEW PICTURE COOK BOOK. Now the favorite cook book of more than 3,500,000 women is bigger, better, more useful than ever! Hundreds of new, easy-to-follow recipes, new pictures, new color pages, old favorites brought up-to-date. Regular binding \$3.75, Ring binding \$4.95



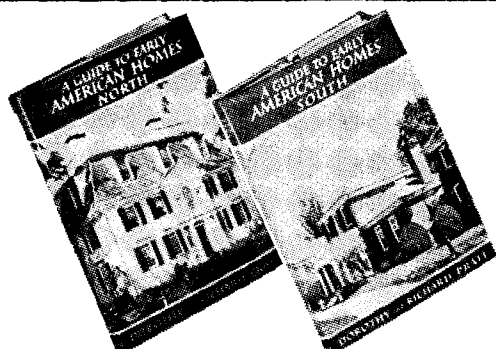
QUEEN OF THE GOLDEN AGE. THE FABULOUS GRACE WILSON VANDERBILT. A glittering chronicle of America's most opulent era, of the million dollar feud that rocked it, and of the amazing woman who ruled it. By her son, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr. Illustrated with photographs. \$4.75



SHIPS OF STEAM. An exciting picture-history of triumph and disaster on the high seas. With its more than 200 rare illustrations, this is a splendid panorama of steamships, from Fulton's CLERMONT to the S.S. UNITED STATES. And a perfect gift for lovers of the sea. 7" x 10". By Lamont Buchanan. \$5.95

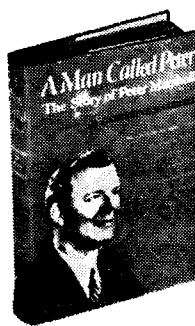


TROLLEY CAR TREASURY. Clang! Clang! Clang! Here come the trolleys! A big, handsome, illustrated gift book brimming with happy memories of a wonderful era! Over 300 magnificent photographs. 8 1/4" x 11". By Frank Rowson, Jr. Stephen D. Maguire, Technical Editor. \$5.95



In these two volumes, America's most distinguished heritage houses open their doors to you. **A GUIDE TO EARLY AMERICAN HOMES — NORTH** includes more than 950 homes, each one a treasured example of American architecture, and over 160 superb photographs. 7" x 10". \$6.95

A GUIDE TO EARLY AMERICAN HOMES — SOUTH features the aristocratic manors of Maryland, the plantation houses of the Carolinas, the beautiful mansions of Georgia, Virginia and Louisiana. Over 850 homes. Over 170 photographs. 7" x 10". Both books by Dorothy and Richard Pratt. \$6.95



A MAN CALLED PETER. Now in a special hard-cover \$1.98 edition, Catherine Marshall's best-selling true-life story of her husband, America's beloved preacher and Chaplain of the U. S. Senate, of their faith and their wonderfully happy marriage. \$1.98

THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS. Bishop Sheen's simple and moving story of the Nativity has become a perennial favorite for the whole family. With beautiful color illustrations by Fritz Kredel. By Fulton J. Sheen. \$1.50

LET'S KEEP CHRISTMAS. One of Peter Marshall's most memorable sermons . . . a stirring plea that we keep Christmas "in all the loveliness of its traditions." Illustrated by Barbara Cooney. By Peter Marshall. \$1.50