

capacity, he was shown a typescript of the "black diaries," and accepting without question the assurance of his superiors that they were genuine, he vouched for their authenticity to the American public. For this, twenty years later, he was savagely attacked by the Irish poet Yeats.

After long reflection, Mr. Noyes came to the conclusion that the diaries were forged and that he had been duped in the interests of propaganda. With rare moral courage, he proclaimed his change of mind and expressed his sorrow for the wrong in which he had been a participant. This book—its title magnanimously borrowed from the poem in which he had been attacked—is his crowning act of reparation to the memory of Sir Roger Casement. He has accepted Yeats's invitation to "speak your bit in public that some amends be made . . . to this most gallant gentleman that is in quicklime laid."

Mr. Noyes sets forth cogent reasons for doubting the genuineness of the diaries and pleads with the British government to allow an impartial and expert committee to examine them.

Mr. Noyes, however, still holds to the theory first propounded in 1936 by Dr. Maloney that the "black diaries" are based upon Casement's transcript of evidence taken down from Armando Normand, one of the worst villains on the Putumayo in 1910. Examination of the transcript of the diaries, which Mr. Noyes has apparently not seen, makes this conjecture almost certainly untenable, and the sooner it is abandoned by Casement's defenders the better.

Mr. Noyes is now, in collaboration with Dr. Roger McHugh of the National University in Dublin, writing a play based on the tragic life and death of Roger Casement. The Abbey Theatre hopes to present it next year in Dublin. It will be, no doubt, a fitting tribute to the memory of one who was a brave and honorable, but cruelly wronged man.

USA AND IRELAND: Exchanging ambassadors with Dublin has for some years been as much a matter of Washington diplomatic routine as exchanging ambassadors with London. Yet a generation back, when President Wilson was discountenancing the idea of Irish independence and Lloyd George's Black and Tans were duplicating Cromwell's Irish atrocities, freedom was still Ireland's dream. That the ancient dream became a reality is in no small measure due to American financial and political aid.

In "America and the Fight for Irish Freedom: 1866-1922" (Devin-Adair, \$7.50) Charles Callan Tansill turns

the light of exhaustive scholarly research on the whole tragi-glorious history, illuminating for the first time some dark corners of Irish-American relations. Ireland's struggle for independence is traced from the American and French revolutions which inspired Wolfe Tone to organize his United Irishmen and strive for the establishment of a republic. Tone died a martyr to the cause, but his dream flamed on till it ignited the 1916 Sinn Féin rising and the revolutionaries' proclamation of a republic. The road to liberation was in part smoothed or blocked by O'Connell's misconception of Irish nationalism, England's "depopulation" policy during the Great Starvation, the nationalist aims of Parnell and the Fenians, Redmond's pro-English orientation, the Clan-na-Gael's vigorous separatism, the psychological leadership and financial backing of the Friends of Irish Freedom.

From the founding of America's first pre-Fenian society in 1854, "the dreadful Irish"—Queen Victoria's designation—were dependent on citizens of the United States not only for financial support against English oppression, but for morale-bolstering and strategic counsel. In his quarrel with Daniel F. Cohalan, key figure in America's promotion of Irish self-determination, Eamon de Valera failed to understand that Judge Cohalan was acting solely as citizen of the

United States. Dr. Tansill fully documents his chronicle of the historic quarrel, but the old controversy over the subject will doubtless keep on sputtering.

—ANN F. WOLFE.

SHE MARRIED AN IRISHMAN: From the man-made chill of Columbia's library stacks to the immemorial natural chill of a fifteen-fireplace Irish house can be a short safari if you marry an O'Neill. But since the O'Neill is himself—charming, unpredictable and a super-Gael—you and your four small children will have to inhabit the drafty old ruin until it's made habitable. Mr. Blandings, in short, had it pretty easy compared to ex-Brooklynite Anne O'Neill-Barna. As she recounts the ordeal in "Himself and I" (Citadel, \$4), it took a mad year, scores of individualistic so-called workmen, and plenty of Irish trickery just to bring electricity to the house. When Himself and his English neighbor, a former IRA enemy, developed an unfragrant passion for organic agriculture, imported garbage got mixed up into the cement. When the do-good author organized the countryside ladies for community service, the elated new clubwomen spent their first earnings on a gay old selfish picnic. Mrs. O'Neill-Barna gives us a marvelous distillation of the spirit of the Irish countryside, touching—but just something—of its pathos.

—A. F. W.



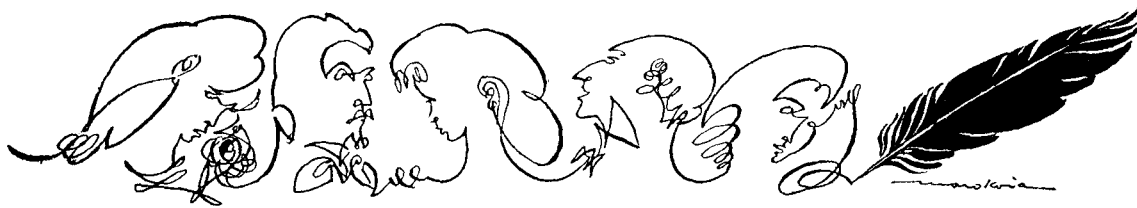
Your Literary I. Q.

Conducted by John T. Winterich

UNHAPPY BRIDES

Here are ten literary brides the sun did *not* shine on, briefly described by Margaret M. Coffin of East Orange, New Jersey. Please identify them. Answers on page 27.

1. This jilted lady had all her clocks stopped at 8.40 a.m., the hour when she received the bad news from the absconding bridegroom.
2. This diminutive bride was shot and almost killed at the altar by the leader of a group of notorious bandits.
3. This short-sighted, middle-aged typist was deserted at the church door by her gentleman friend, who was later revealed to have been her stepfather in disguise.
4. This wedding was shattered in mid-ceremony by the bridegroom's brother-in-law.
5. This Austrian lady was deserted by her fiancé when her marriage portion was lost at sea.
6. This witty and talented nobleman's bride was informed, on the first day of her married life, that there was a dead man in the cellar of their house.
7. At her wedding to a knight whom she detested, this unhappy bride was kissed by a member of the English royal family.
8. A famous love story tells of the marriage of a beautiful Irish princess to an unpleasant old king, the uncle of her lover.
9. This green-eyed young beauty married a shy young man whom she despised in order to spite the man she really loved.
10. This headstrong girl brought disgrace on her family by eloping with an unscrupulous army officer.



Learning the Techniques of Poetry

How can the ordinary man learn something about the techniques of poetry? SR's John Ciardi surveys some new handbooks, source books, studies of individual poets that are designed for a basic library of poetry and poetics.

By JOHN CIARDI

EVERY mail delivery to SR's Poetry Desk turns up at least a half dozen letters that ask in one form or another, "Where can I learn about the techniques of poetry?" The only answer, of course, is, "By reading. By reading with a technical eye." Such reading, however, requires training, and unless one has had the rare good luck to study under a good teacher, he must dig out his technical awareness on his own, by more reading—assuming, that is, a basic willingness to concede that the human values of a poem are no more destroyed by a passion for its formal structure than are those of a symphony by a technical passion for such matters as orchestration, harmony, and counterpoint.

But what sort of reading should one look for? The current season's list is so rich in titles that will serve this purpose, that it seems well to review them together along with brief mentions of one or two older titles, all of which round out into a good basic library for those who wish to know more about the poet's devices and his creative process.

Babette Deutsch's "Poetry Handbook" (Funk & Wagnalls, \$3.50) is a short dictionary of basic poetic terms, each of which is briefly but meaningfully defined, discussed, and illustrated. Miss Deutsch has aimed to be useful rather than exhaustive, and accordingly she has left out a number of terms no longer current, as, for example, those for the rarer Provençal verse forms and for the many Greek meters that are not adaptable to English. I wish Miss Deutsch had had more to say about metrics, especially since what she does have to say is so good, and I hope that in some future edition (may there be many such) she will add to her excellent basic discus-

sions some notes to books in which more exhaustive treatments can be found. Such notes could increase the central value of the handbook as a guide to poetic techniques without destroying the concision that makes the book so useful. Certainly it is a book that belongs on every poet's and on every good reader's desk. A good place for it is next to Cleanth Brooks's and Austin Warren's long-standard "Understanding Poetry," now available in paper covers (Holt, \$4). The glossary of the Brooks-Warren volume will refer the reader to further illustrations of many of the terms Miss Deutsch discusses. The Brooks and Warren, too, has rather more to say about metrics.

A. F. SCOTT'S "The Poet's Craft" (Cambridge University Press, \$3.50) is a real if narrow vein of ore for those who want to dig into the poet's actual process of composition. Mr. Scott keeps his comments to a minimum but sets forth a meticulously researched collection of manuscript revisions in well known poems. These he follows with a section on the poets' printed revisions, a fascinating short section on the prose materials from which a number of poets drew their poems, a section of comparative translations, and finally a section of unsigned poems for evaluation apart from the persuasion of great or not-so-great signatures. The total makes up into a highly useful source book. Wise teachers will raid it to the betterment of their instruction, good readers will treasure it for long-range browsing, and one may well recommend to a number of our poetry societies a series of discussion programs based on such source materials in place of the more common business of for-gathering to say sweet things in praise of one another's mediocre poems.

There is no better way of coming to grips with the actual fiber of poetry than through the careful study of some one admired poet, especially when the study centers not on the poet's biography, though that is always useful, but on the actual process of creation and revision. Keats-lovers will find E. C. Pettet's "On The Poetry of Keats" (Cambridge University Press, \$6.50) a useful exploration not only into Keats but into the sources and methods of poetry in general. Mr. Pettet makes no claim to a definitive book; he has rather written a collection of essays unified by a loving perception of Keats's great genius. Especially valuable as studies of the good poet's passion for technical excellence are Chapter II on Keats's Images and "Sensations," and Chapter III on Melody in Keats's "Poesy."

"Byron's Don Juan," by Truman Guy Steffan and Willis W. Pratt (University of Texas Press, 4 vols., boxed, \$30) is no collection of essays but a massive and definitive study of every traceable revision, whether in manuscript or in print, that Byron made in the course of writing what is certainly the greatest discursive poem in English, unless there is a defender of Wordsworth's "Prelude" in the house. The center of Steffan's and Pratt's research is a jointly edited variorum edition (Volumes II and III) and is flanked by Steffan's Volume I, "The Making of a Masterpiece" and on the other by Pratt's Volume IV, "Notes on the Variorum Edition." The Volume IV notes explain Byron's references to current and past events. Volume I sets itself the task of framing Byron's creative process, his principles of writing and of revision, and his emotional situation at the time of the writing and revision. Part II of Volume I, "The Anvil of Composition" is such a study of the creative process