

COMMENT on BOOKS and AUTHORS

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Western Studies

FIGHTING MEN OF THE WEST.

By Dane Coolidge. New York: E. P. Dutton and company.

Dane Coolidge has contributed another to his series of western studies; this time of the types of men of whom the tradition is still alive, in some cases the men themselves, makers of the history and atmosphere of the frontier. He begins with that earliest of the trailmakers, Colonel Charles Goodnight, who first beat out the way across the Staked Plains and preempted the Valley of the Pecos for the cattlemen of Texas. Goodnight was associated with John Chisum, maker of the Chisum Trail to the cattle market, who follows next in Coolidge's list, and they were both more or less mixed up with the Lincoln County war, with Billy the Kid and their contemporaries. Chisum was the only man who ever talked Billy the Kid out of his intention to kill, and Goodnight was instrumental in bringing William Boney to justice. All his life he hated a thief and a murderer. Goodnight had an agreement with his own men that if any killing was done the killer should be tried by his fellows and, if found guilty, hung. He turned back herds that were offered him for sale when they were found with strange brands, and maintained the standard from which Chisum departed many times when he was all the law there was west of the Pecos, and maintained his ascendancy without a gun.

Clay Allison, professional man-killer follows next, and the incident of his baulked draw on Mason Bowman, and then Tom Horn, notable companion of the Chief of the Apache scouts, who killed rustlers for \$600 a head, thus stopping cattle rustling at Coon Hole, and died game on the scaffold.

The book is well done, the detail explicit and striking, the photographs authentic—in particular there is one of Billy the Kid which goes nearer to explaining him than many paragraphs—and the psychological element not overworked. Besides being interesting reading, it is a genuine contribution to the frontier history of the southwest, which will not need to be done again. It combines historic incident with authentic color in true and representative pictures of time and scene.

Best Sellers

(Compiled by The Book Nook)
NOVELS

1. *The Fountain*, by Charles Morgan.
2. *Benefits Received*, by Alice Grant Rosman.
3. *Rueful Mating*, by G. B. Stern.
4. *Undertow*, by A. Hamilton Gibbs.
5. *The Good Earth*, by Pearl S. Buck.

GENERAL

1. *What We Live By*, by Abbe Ernest Dimnet.
2. *Epic of America*, by James Truslow Adams.
3. *Hindoo Holiday*, by J. R. Ackerley.

THE BEST RENTER

The Fountain, by Charles Morgan.

NEGRO POET

Alpheus Butler is a young American Negro author who is a Fellow in English at Fisk university. He compiled "The Parnassian," a collection of prose and poetry. Now the Christopher Publishing House of Boston, Massachusetts, has just published a collection of his sonnets and lyrics under the title "Make Way for Happiness."

Entertaining Novel

THE WAY OF THE PHOENIX. By Stephen McKenna. New York: Dodd, Mead and company.

To call Mr. McKenna an expert novelist would be to damn him with faint praise, yet that is precisely what he is. This is, by announcement, his thirty-fourth published volume, and it becomes immediately apparent that in his long literary career there is very little he has not learned about the craft of fiction.

The present volume treats of the fortunes of Rhoda and Tony—a pair of lovers who, judged by all externalities, are eminently unsuited to each other. Rhoda is of the landed aristocracy; Tony of the aggressive mercantile class, and while they were brought up together from childhood, this proximity wrought very little change in their individual makeups—if anything, it intensified their differences. Against a background of pre- and post-war England, Mr. McKenna manipulates his characters, and to this task he brings about all the gifts one could reasonably expect a novelist to possess. He is a political economist of no mean understanding, and the course of his narrative serves to clarify the changing intellectual and emotional attitudes of men and women who lived before, during, and after the World War.

He handles, with consummate skill, a host of well-differentiated characters; he has immense technical information on many subjects; he has the knack of building suspense and compelling the reader's attention to the very end—and for the reader in search of entertainment, this is more than enough to be offered.

A Balanced Ration for
a Week's Reading

FARAWAY. By J. B. Priestley. Harpers.

The story of a search for buried treasure told with Priestley's usual delight in the foibles and eccentricities of personality and with his gusto for adventure.

CHARLOTTE BRONTE. By E. F. Benson. Longmans, Green.

An interesting and well-balanced biography.

MORE MERRY - GO - ROUND. Liveright.

Further vignettes of Washington figures.

PUBLISHES SONG BOOK

Random House has published George Gershwin's "Song Book," which is worth your attention because it contains this young composer's eighteen greatest song hits, each song followed by Gershwin's own piano arrangement as he has played it. There are also illustrations in color by Alajavlov and a special song is inserted in a pocket in the inside back cover. This is "Mischa, Yascha, Toscha, Sascha," Gershwin's hilarious summary of the violinist racket, never before published. The edition is limited to three hundred copies at twenty bucks a throw and was heavily over-subscribed before publication! What price the depression now!

IS BOOK LEAGUE'S CHOICE

We greatly like the title of E. M. Delafield's newest work of fiction, which is "A Good Man's Love." E. M. Delafield is a fine satirist, and we are glad that the Book League of America has chosen "A Good Man's Love" for August. We have been a Delafield admirer for some time. Dr.

19th Century France

LUCILLE CLERY, A Woman of Intrigue. By Joseph Shearing. Harper Brothers.

Reviewed by Louise Lackner

This unusual book defies classification: it is at once a biography, murder story, and historical romance. The characters and fundamental facts are taken from a famous French murder case of the nineteenth century which had a great effect on the politics of that day but which was never completely solved. In this story the author, although he has disguised the names of the principal characters, has presented a highly plausible interpretation of the motive and of the actual crime. He has drawn a remarkably vivid picture of post-Napoleonic France and of the important men and women who moved across this brilliant background.

Lucille Clery, whose grandfather was one of Napoleon's marshals but who was herself born of doubtful parentage, has determined on the career of governess as the only fitting one for a woman of her intelligence but lacking a tangible social background. She was a great beauty, possessed of infinite poise and shrewdness, and was obsessed by an ambition to better her position. In order to gain this end she adopted an attitude of meek subservience which won for her the place of governess in one of the noble families of France, that of the Duc du Boccage. Because Mme. du Boccage was a weak, ineffectual woman, the governess quickly rose to a position of great influence in the household. The duke's admiration for her abilities led him to grant her privileges not ordinarily accorded a governess; her dressmaker was the same as that of the duchess, she attended the opera with the duke's mother, and in many small ways she was given absolute power in this great family.

When the duke's admiration for her talents showed signs of turning to an admiration for her person, Lucille Clery saw that the golden goal of her ambition was almost within grasp. The only obstacle was Mme. du Boccage, whose futile love for her husband engendered in her a hatred for this woman who had cleverly usurped her place. She tried in vain to discharge her; it was impossible to outwit Mme. Clery.

Soon, however, in spite of the governess's discretion (the growing love between her and the duke manifested itself only in significant glances and veiled conversations) the outside world sensed a scandal. After a struggle with her desire to stay, Lucille saw that it would be better for her to leave. The duke was enraged. Soon afterward the whole of France was horrified by the brutal murder of Mme. du Boccage.

The rest of the story concerns the clever maneuvers by which Lucille Clery secured for herself a new place in society.

It is a book that once begun is difficult to put down. The author's clear characterizations and brilliant descriptive powers make this story a valuable commentary on nineteenth century France. And the easy style in which it is written carries along an intricate plot with the utmost smoothness.

Richard Burton declares that as he read the book he had to search back to Jane Austen for a parallel, and that is certainly, as he says, high praise.