

## BIOGRAPHY

An extensive historical study of "The First Earl of Shaftesbury" has been published under the auspices of The American Historical Association, by Louise Fargo Brown (Appleton-Century).

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## COMMENT on BOOKS and AUTHORS

## Brief Mention

Three little books which should be noted are "Mary, Queen of Scots," by Eric Linklater, the brilliant author of "Juan in America" (Appleton-Century), a little study of "Ludwig Lewisoohn" by Adolph Gillis (Duffield), and a compact, convenient, and well written brief history of "American Literature," by Stanley T. Williams whose standing as a scholar gives his summary an authority which other attempts to condense the history of American literature have not always possessed (Lippincott). A very useful book in a field which has not hitherto been represented in English is "The Turkish Theatre," by Nicholas N. Martinovitch. This little book deals only with the popular drama of the Turks, which happens to be their only real contribution to dramatic literature. The book contains not merely a historical sketch but also transcripts of characteristic plays with pictures of the performers in costumes (New York, Theatre Arts Inc). From the Princeton University Press come an "Introduction to the Reading of the Old Testament," by Duncan Black MacDonald. This is not a systematic treatise but rather an attempt to indicate a new way of regarding the mass of Biblical reading "which may be found fresh and full of meaning."

## THE ITALIAN RIVIERA

Warwick Deeping's *Two Black Sheep* is a departure from his usual locale in that most of this story takes place in Italy and on the Riviera, although his England looms prominently in the background. Two lovely and forlorn, though idealistic, individuals find love and peace together after undergoing similar vicissitudes, namely unhappiness, misery, misunderstanding, and prison. As is usual, Deeping's descriptions of scenery and events are unexcelled, and his characters are so marvellously drawn, including naughty little Angela Pym and her dreadful mother, that each actually lives. Though still the cynic, the author "soft-pedals" this characteristic to some degree—and a pleasing one—in *The Two Black Sheep*.

## BYZANTINE CULTURE

Highly specialized, but containing material difficult to come at in English, is the "History of Christianity in the Balkans," by Matthew Spinka (American Society of Church History, Chicago). This is substantially a study in the spread of Byzantine culture among the South Slavs and contains much about the extraordinary and too little known culture of the old Serbian empire.

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## Prolific Writer



Margaret Ayer Barnes of Chicago is swiftly becoming one of the most prolific writers of our times. All of her books have been best sellers, and now her latest one, "Within This Present," is being read and enjoyed by thousands throughout the country.

## SHORT STORIES

W. Somerset Maugham never fails us. In his latest book, *Ah King*, containing six remarkable short stories, he has again produced penetrating studies of life in his impeccable and exquisite literary style. Here are the quiet, dramatic, sardonic tragi-comedies of men and women transfixed against the magic background of the East. And though some critics of *Ah King* have accused its author of bitterness and cynicism, I must agree with Maugham himself when he says that he has simply tried to set down his impressions of strange and ruthless forces that are beyond our control.

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY

*Along This Way* by James Weldon Johnson is truly an amazing document! It is an autobiography plainly and simply set forth of a superman, a negro who has been at once principal of a school, lawyer, editor, poet, musical comedy composer, and diplomat. There is so much perspective, penetrating philosophy, sparkling wit, and withal, such a lack of swaggering that the journal deserves to rank with the spirituals as a genuine contribution to American art.

## POETRY

J. H. Evans' "The Poems of George Crabbe" (Macmillan) is a useful handbook for readers of the great realist poet. Another handbook, largely botanical, geological, and biological, is "The California Deserts: A Visitor's Handbook," by Edmund C. Jaeger. (Stanford University Press.)

## LYRIC POETRY

These *Snatches of Song* have in high measure the vivid concreteness of imagery, the sincerity, the warm personal emotion, which we demand of lyric poetry. They range the whole gamut of feeling—and the wide world round and back again. The author is Celinda Bishoprick Abbott.

## Novel About Chicago

**WITHIN THIS PRESENT.** By Margaret Ayer Barnes. Houghton Mifflin company.

Reviewed by Vera McDermid

Margaret Ayer Barnes is becoming, in fact she might already be called, one of America's most popular fiction writers. All four of her novels—*Prevailing Winds*, *Years of Grace*, *Westward Passage*, and now *Within This Present*—have been best sellers, and that is a splendid record in these days when authors often fall down in one book or another. In spite of its six hundred pages *Within This Present* keeps your interest to the very last word. The story never drags for the style and action are too swift moving. The novel opens in the year 1914 and carries the reader to the inauguration of President Roosevelt in March, 1933.

Although there are many characters in the story, the main one—the heroine is Sally Sewall who resides with her family in one of the north shore suburbs of Chicago. Sally is 16 at the opening of the story when a family reunion is being held on the occasion of grandmother Sewall's seventieth birthday. When "Granny" is asked to make a speech she reviews her life, and tells about early Chicago, the Civil war, and the great fire. However, she stresses the fact that the family has changed, "we've lost a good deal more than we've gained," she states. Granny is a little disappointed in the way her family has turned out, in spite of the fact that Sally's father (Horace Sewall) is president of a large Chicago bank, on the Board of the Art Institute, a trustee of the orchestra, etc., and that another son, Lambert, is the rector of Saint George's church and the Bishop's chaplain. But Granny thinks that her family is not serious enough, that her children haven't any sense of responsibility, that they have lost something of the character and force of her own generation.

America enters the World war when Sally is at a fashionable boarding school in the East. She is only 19 when she marries Alan MacLeod, with whom she has grown up, and whose father is in the same bank as her father. Alan goes to France, and there follows an interesting account of those stressing war times. After the Armistice Alan, on his return from Europe, finds it hard to adjust himself to married life, having lost ideals and apparently his love for his wife. Sally with her two sons finally leaves her husband and goes to New York, and whether they ever become reconciled the reader does not know until the end of the book.

Mrs. Barnes has written a thrilling story which has a lot of depth and significance. She understands youth with uncanny insight. She knows the little mannerisms of young people; she knows what they think about, and what their problems are; what they talk about, and how they act. And then her stories are always original and brilliantly told. Her latest book is well worth reading.

## STEAMER PASSENGERS

Almost like taking a world cruise in person is it to read *Sea Level*, by Anne Parrish. The author has evidently taken a cruise. She has seen much—and has also found her fellow-cruisers not always as absolutely charming a group as the Steamship company's advertisements would lead us to believe.