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BOOKS • REVIEWS • AUTHORS

"They Seek a Country" Is One of Two Novels About the Boers' Trek

They Seek a Country
 By Francis Brett Young. Reynal &
 Hitchcock, N. Y.

Almost simultaneously, this season, the Boer trek of South Africa furnished readers with two historical novels—one *The Turning Wheels* by Stuart Cloete, and the other *They Seek a Country* by Francis Brett Young.

Both are rugged, masculine pieces of fiction; both are as historically accurate as men who have lived in the country and studied its people and events can make them. Unfortunately for the authors, one novel tends to overshadow the other and the two suffer by comparison. The public, however, profits handsomely by this rich store of imaginative history.

A Flowing Prose

Those who choose to read Francis Brett Young's story, although they may miss some of the fire and lusty daring of Stuart Cloete's book, will find instead a flowing English prose characterized by an unfailing aptitude for the exact word. At times the historical larding proves thicker than a rapid-fire fiction reader might require, and a supplementary map of the country would add to a better understanding to the plot—otherwise the novel is a superior one.

Qualifying that statement, it is superior for those who care for adventure with a capital "A." John Oakley, the hero, was the son of a poor English iron worker. After the boy lost his mother and his uncle, he drifted into the rural districts to live with his grandfather. Convicted for complicity in poaching, he was transported and escaped from a convict ship to take refuge with a Dutch family which had settled in South Africa.

A Boer Trek

Shortly after John's incorporation into the economic set-up of the family, harassed by raiders and deprived of proper governmental protection, they loaded all their possessions on twelve ox carts and headed northward for another home. The trek requires 18 months.

Industrial conditions in England in the nineteenth century, as described at the outset of the novel, the vicious crowding of men on convict ships, and the stirring adventures of pioneer life in a new country are the brilliant spots in *They Seek a Country*.

Issue Fox's Fourth Volume on Yachting

Uffa Fox, the internationally famous authority on nautical matters, has just written *Racing, Cruising and Design*, the fourth in a series of books which have become annual events for yachting and motor boat enthusiasts. *Racing, Cruising and Design*, which Scribner's published on January 7, contains plans of the most successful vessels and gives advice on racing, cruising, and power craft, gadgets, and a wide variety of similar topics.

Children's Author

Just because Eliza Orne White has been blind for several years her readers assume that she dictates her stories. "On the contrary," says Miss White, now over 80 years old, "I still write them on the typewriter, just as I did when I had my first machine and copied 'Miss Brooks' on it, more than 40 years ago." *The Farm Beyond the Town* is Miss White's new juvenile on the Houghton Mifflin list.

Of Frontier Life



Francis Brett Young, who first saw South Africa as an officer in the World War, is the author of "They Seek a Country," the Reynal & Hitchcock historical novel, which describes frontier life on that great continent of black natives and white settlers.

Countess Prepares a Handbook on Marriage

Like Gilbert's *Pirates*, all brides look forward to indulging in the felicity of unbounded domesticity; but not all of them succeed in doing so, for there is no school for wives other than marriage itself.

The Countess de Forceville, whose own ten-year-old marriage has been successfully combined with an equally successful life in business and in society, tells in her forthcoming *Marriages Are Made at Home*, how to take the courses in that school, when the examinations come, what you have to know to pass them, and how to hoodwink the professor.

Unfortunately she can't recommend any homework or collateral reading; there isn't any except her own book, and that was published by Alfred A. Knopf on January 10.

Present Nathan's New Essays on the Drama

After thirty years as its best friend and severest critic, George Jean Nathan finds more promise and more vitality in the American theatre than in those of any of the world's other capitals—especially Hollywood.

And this despite too much literature and not enough drama in most of the 'literary' drama of the year, a strong Iolanthe influence on certain leading men, too much critical respect for old-timers and old-time ways, and too many ancient ingenues.

These and other theatrical matters are examined, and the palms and the raspberries handed around, in *The Morning After the First Night*, Mr. Nathan's new collection of critical essays which Knopf published on January 3.

On World Peace

Nicholas Murray Butler's new book, *The Family of Nations*, was published by Charles Scribner's sons on January 7. Discussing numerous national and international problems, *The Family of Nations* is focused on the timely question of world peace.

Kenneth Horan's Book, New Novel by Sinclair Lewis Listed for January

Doubleday, Doran announce that they published, the first week in January, the following new books:

Theodora: The Circus Empress. By Rene Kraus. Translated by June Head.

The story of the fabulous woman who rose from circus girl to empress in the decadent Byzantine Empire, told by a young Austrian journalist who is an authority on Byzantine history and culture.

Oh, Promise Me. By Kenneth Horan of Evanston.

A companion book to *Remember the Day*, continuing the fortunes of the redoubtable Ingham family after Pappa has been elected to Congress.

Your Taxes. By William J. Shultz.

Why you pay taxes and how you pay them; a story of racket and reform, a hand-book for the tax-rebel, by the professor of economics at the College of the City of New York.

The Well of Ararat. By Emmanuel Varandyan.

The novel which won first prize in the Avery Hopwood contest at the University of Michigan by unanimous decision of the judges, Clifton Fadiman, Whit Burnett and Mary Ellen Chase. A tapestry of life in a modern Persian village.

The Tree Drops a Leaf. By Ruby M. Ayres.

The romance of a girl who spurned family tradition, by a competent storyteller.

Silent Witnesses. By John Stephen Strange.

The Crime club selection for January; another case in the career of Barney Gantt, news photographer with unique detective ability whose last adventure had to do with *The Bell in the Fog*.

A Bullet in the Ballet. By Caryl Brahms and S. J. Simon.

A Crime club book, laid against a background new to mystery fiction: the Russian Ballet.

The latter part of January Doubleday, Doran promise for publication a Sinclair Lewis novel, and an autobiography of Lincoln Ellsworth as follows:

Beyond Horizons. By Lincoln Ellsworth.

The autobiography of the famous explorer; the story of a life embracing the maximum of excitement and adventure, told as a personal record of hard-won achievement.

The Prodigal Parents. By Sinclair Lewis.

A novel about the revolt of parents against the revolt of youth, with a successful, middle-class realist, Fred Cornplow, who may take his place beside Dodsworth, Arrowsmith and Babbitt.

Describes Georgia of the Soviet Oil Fields

A new book on Georgia, legendary scene of mountain bandits and feudal warring clans and present day oil-field of the Soviet Union, is *Prometheus and the Bolsheviks*, by John Lehmann, announced for publication by Alfred A. Knopf on January 10.

Mr. Lehmann, who is brother to Rosamund Lehmann and editor of the semi-annual *New Writing*, wandered freely in Georgia in gathering his material; he met and talked with politicians, poets, playwrights, doctors, and workers.

His book describes the places and the people—what he saw and heard of life in socialist towns, what is left of the heritages of the past, and what the up-thrust oil derricks are making of the Georgia of today and tomorrow.