Book Reviews

By John Philip Morris

If you find yourself in a gilded palace of sin like the Marigold Garden, the Bridge or the Sweet Shop and if you time and tide-particularly the wet, wet, tide-back to, say, June 30, 1918 and you above all Lyons. there make a new friend, and all new acquaintances quickly become friends under those circumstances, why you just naturally take him back to your table and gladly and noisily introduce him to your gang.

But if you have an old friend, a friend who is dear to you through auld acquaintance and similarity of tastes and likes and, above all, similar dislikes, such iriendship is an almost sacred thing that you hestitate to share promiscuously.

This with a critic, or with a mere reviewer such as I. Videlicet, a book comes to hand still hot from the press and you enjoy it and hasten to voice the enjoyment so all that read may run to share your pleasure. But if in some little known, second growth and bush blocked path of literature you discover a gleeful little glade you become almost unconsciously a hedonist and it is with fear and misgiving that you reveal the location.

For several years I have searched out and then devoured with avidity the books of A. Neil Lyons.

Lacking all the necessary mass appeal, Mr. Lyons has never been popularized in America nor has fame placed his pedestal particularly high even in his native Albion, but if you are the sort of person who loves etchings rather than oil paintings and the Andante Cantabile rather than the Intermezzo and enjoy Creme D' Yvette, Carl Van Vetchen, Caviar and Cabell, if you prefer Menken, Hunker, Moore and Anderson rather than Menken, Huneker, Moore and Hergesheimer-for there is a difference, if you prefer Movies to Vaudeville and would rather see a poor Eugene O'Neil play-tho there isn't any, rather than the best movie ever produced, if you believe that some other political party could be planned that would be better than the two we now have with us, if you are this sort of person-and sometimes if you are not-you should find the very ultimate of enjoyment in Lyons rather than in some valiable novel.

Mr. Lyons depicts the joys, the sorrow of the London poor. It is-as Dr. Brink says-all sideways sort of fun. His people are always the dregs-CLARA is a flower girl who has been to jail, ARTHUR'S a coffee house of the lowest grade, Dr. Brink of SIXPENNY PIECES has a practice who pays that sum for a consultation with the prescrip- | you can walk miles without fatigue. tion thrown in, but just as the best roses grow out of the best manured soil so Mr. Lyons has extracted the very ottar of humor out of those unprepossing material.

And, yet, just as with Ottar of Roses, the perfume and the rememberance linger. Who, once having read of them, can ever forget the tale of the circus who had but one horse and painted him afresh eight times each evening so that each performer might appear to be riding a different steed and who finally dies-I think from painter's colic-and who when three men perform a post mortem to ease the general curiosity as to what color the horse really was-find it a

Or Faithful Freddy, the soldier who had been a plumber's assistant and who stood ready to bring six betrayed fe-

males to prove that he was the pillar of fidelity.

Or the-here--unrepeatable story Jennie's baby in CLARA who 'ad one on Alby.

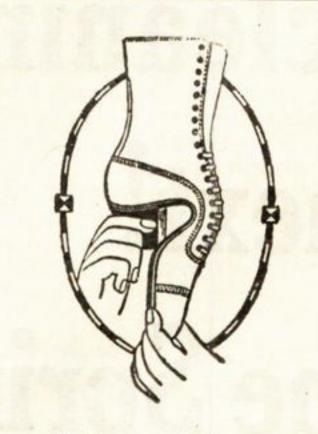
These incidents may not seem unroariously funny aside from their settings. As Ollyett insisted-it is the tone of the thing and the style, the damned unforgetable wonderful style. Yea, verily for have been so fortunate as to have turned sheer delight we must go to the English and seek Dodson and Birmingham and

I am sorry to say that you will have trouble getting holds of Lyon's books. They are for sale in few stores-tho know Kroch has somes-and contained in fewer libraries, public or private.

If this review intrigues you, and I have failed miserably if it has not, you will manage to get hold of one of Neil's works and then, having read that you will borrow, beg or steal the others.

That is my advise and just one word more. We have just purchased a new dog and Mrs. Morris has strict, the very strictest orders not to lend none of OUR Lyones to none.

John Philip Morris.



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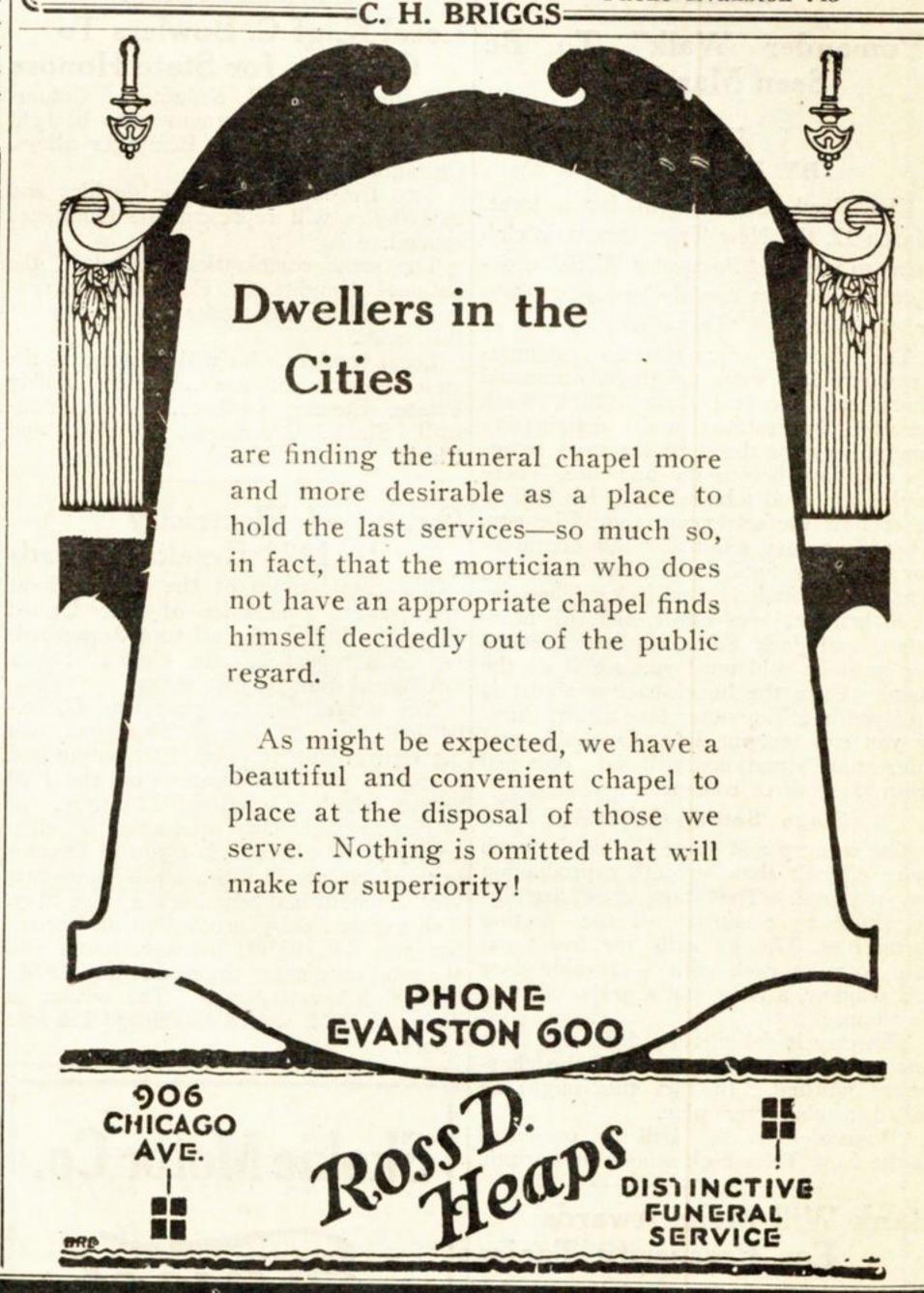
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