

# Lord's

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## NEWEST BOOKS AND BOOK REVIEWS

### DID YOU KNOW—

That "Susan Shane" by Roger Burlingame has been published in England?

That two books on the life of Lindbergh have appeared at the bookstores and a third is promised for the near future?

That William Dana Orcutt, author of "In the Quest of the Perfect Book" has been in Europe gathering material for a companion volume which will be entitled "The Kingdom of Books?"

That a group of professors of the University of Chicago are planning to write a history of Chicago for the centennial celebration which will be held in 1933?

Sherwood Anderson, an author himself, felt qualified to give some excellent advice on "how to converse with authors" in the June Vanity Fair. "In general it is a bad thing to speak at any great length of an author's work unless you have read a little of it. He will almost always catch you," and further, "If you want to win his entire gratitude, not to say fervent devotion, and have an opportunity to look into one of his books you might commit one sentence to memory."

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### Reviews of New Books

The pursuit of pure knowledge is a luxury seldom accorded to anyone in this age of utilitarianism. We are all so busy with things which are good, not necessarily in themselves, but good for something that we have little chance to pause for those abstractions which beckon sometimes, though perhaps feebly, from the shadows.

But Professor John Livingston Lowes found one of these shades anything but a feeble beckoner. As he says in his preface "A glittering eye and a skinny hand and a long gray beard could not have done more summary execution, nor for that matter, could the Wedding-Cue himself have been, at the outset, a more reluctant auditor." And the thing which beckoned was the vision of the poetic genius at work, the genius of Coleridge which wove those fantastic brilliant tales of "The Ancient Mariner" and "Kubla Khan." It is to the making of these two that Professor Lowes has confined himself.

Where did Coleridge, a man who had never been on the sea until after the writing of "The Ancient Mariner" find the material for that incomparable poem? Obviously the raw material must have come to him from outside, from things he heard or read. With this realization Professor Lowes has traced the poet's reading, picked up the bits of the elements here and there which when fused made great poetry. It is not these elements themselves or what would academically be called the "sources" of Coleridge's poetry in which he has been interested but in the actual process of fusing, the workings of the creative faculty. And he has written it not as a learned treatise for scholars only, but as a romance interesting to anyone who likes romance. As he himself puts it, "I am not sure, indeed, that one of the chief services which literary scholarship can render is not precisely the attempt, at least, to make its finds available (and interesting if that may be) beyond the precincts of its own solemn troops and sweet societies. At all events, that is the adventurous enterprise of this volume." An adventurous enterprise, indeed, and one worthily carried out.

—ESTHER GOULD.

Captain John W. Thomason, author of "Red Pants" and "Fix Bayonets," has just returned from Nicaragua where he was in command of the American Marines. He is going to illustrate a new edition of Thomas Boyd's "Through the Wheat" which will be published in the fall.

### THE MAN BEHIND THE MASK

By Grace MacGowan Cooke

"The reader will be kept on edge until the last page."—

St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

\$2.00

F. A. Stokes & Company

### Pot Shots at Pot Boilers

There are but few nuances of thought or sensation that cannot be reincarnated in as great or greater intensity in print. Human experience is intensified by the perusal of books, good or bad, so that we relive our grief and joy, ambitions and dreams, in the reading of chronicles of other lives. Through all this expressionism there has remained one inarticulate, the negro. The numerous anthologies of negro poetry published in the past, have been a striving for expression, rather than expression in itself, until now that James Weldon Johnson has written "God's Trombones." The book is exceptional in that it does not resort to negro dialect but in pure (qualified) English visualizes that most ephemeral abstract, the negro spirit. I first read "Go Down Death," one of the seven sermons in the volume, in the American Mercury and have awaited the book feeling that this poem must surely be the strawberries on the top of the box. But it wasn't; if any one of the sermons has any greater power than its neighbors it is "Let My People Go." . . . Those of you who are victims of either high school or A. E. F. French will appreciate "France on Ten Words a Day" written by H. McCarty-Lee and illustrated by Peter Arno, the creator of the delectable Whoops sisters in the New Yorker. Mr. McCarty-Lee does not take you through the intricacies of French syntax nor impose upon you the innumerable prepositions with which that language is afflicted. He gives you a few utilitarian words with gestures that make them sufficient unto the day thereof. Even though you do not contemplate a trip abroad, the book will prove an amusing comment on French mannerisms. . . . In a new magazine, "The Smokers Companion," published in New York, there is an article by Max Eastman on "What Is Bolshevism—A First Hand Experience." Which should be excellent propaganda for the Anti-Cigarette League. . . . "Lost Ecstasy" by Mary Roberts Rinehart, has the fault of the best of pot boilers. In the first of the book Mrs. Rinehart has portrayed only conventional two-dimension characters who fail even to attain the action of marionettes. This first portion of the book is wholly without virtue but in the latter part the actors miraculously come to life, and the book eventually leaves you with a sense of having been in contact with a book of power. Altogether, "Lost Ecstasy" is very much like the little girl who had a curl in the middle of her forehead. . . . "A Shadowy Third," by Elizabeth Sprigge, is an interesting account of the psychological effect of the kisses you refuse. . . . I hope you have forgotten to remember "The Calling of Dan Matthews" by Harold Bell Wright. Word comes to us that Mr. Matthews, twenty years older than he was in the aforementioned book, appears again in "God and the Groceryman." Mr. Wright's newest book. This is just in the nature of a casual warning. . . . There has been an extraordinary and, to us, distressing amount of wordy dissertations on the advisability of reading "worth while" books this summer in lieu of our usual back-sliding to the lighter side of literature. In fear that this tendency to sobriety and austerity may be taken seriously by readers at large, we hasten to assure the public that the present weather has had no such undermining effect on our morale.

B. B.