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BOOK SHOP

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By Virginia Woolf

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NEWEST BOOKS AND BOOK REVIEWS

DID YOU KNOW—

That Chicago university awarded recently the Jolin Billings Fiske prize to Stanley Stewart Newman for his poems entitled "Songs for a Windy Day?"

That the dictaphone which has hitherto been associated with the business world is used by authors as well?

That "The author of Power," Leon Feuctwanger, has published a recent book which has enjoyed increasing popularity in Germany?

That Marius Andree, in his autobiography of Christopher Columbus, has painted him quite differently than the histories?

The John Day company is preparing to bring out in this country a series of books under the general title, "Notable British Trials." Each volume will tell the story of one trial, with chapters giving the details of the crime for which the defendant was placed on trial, followed by an extended report of the court proceedings. The first six volumes of this series will be published in June.

—New York Times

Michael Arlen recently turned aside from our shores and went instead to Peru. It is said that he re-wrote "Young Men in Love" entirely, not being satisfied with the first version. We should have thought Mr. Arlen could have done better the first time.

Opera Books and Librettos for Ravinia

MISCELLANEOUS

Silver Cities of Yucatan

Gregory Mason \$3.50

Rogues and Scoundrels

Philip W. Sergeant \$4.50

Thomas Paine, Prophet and
Martyr of Democracy

Mary Agnes Best \$3.00

My Thirty Years of Friendships

Salvatore Cortesi \$3.00

Three Important New Novels

Twilight Sleep

Edith Wharton \$2.50

Giants in the Earth

O. E. Rolvaag \$2.50

Marching On

James Boyd \$2.50

Suggestions on Children's Books

A Nursery Story of England
(illustrated)

Elisabeth O'Neill \$3.00

Chee-Wee

Chee-Wee & Loki (6-12 yrs.)

Moon \$2.00

Chandler's

630 DAVIS STREET
University 123

Life in the Poorhouse Described by an Inmate

"POORHOUSE SWEENEY"—Ed Sweeney.

"Poorhouse Sweeney" is a remarkable document. Imagine a man, of an intelligence of, say twelve years, inmate of a county poorhouse, sitting down with a tablet and pencil to inscribe the story of his life. Such a thing never happened before or if it did surely it never found its way onto the publishers' lists.

Theodore Dreiser has written a foreword for Mr. Ed Sweeney's book—such an excellent poorhouse name that no wonder the public rose up and called "hoax" and the publishers had to declare solemnly and insistently that it was genuine—and the foreword is in effect a review. He calls it "human, interesting and refreshing." It is all of these. Then he goes on to explain that it is not great. No, it is very far from great. It is merely the shambling, complaining, quarreling, yet ironically amusing story which might be given at your back door by a man made unduly garrulous by a sandwich and a glass of milk. But no, it is more frank, more revealing than that. One reveals more by the written word than the spoken one, for in writing even though one is indicating it to others it is first of all to one's self. And this self-revealing quality makes this book intensely human and painfully, heart-breakingly, real.

There is much to be learned from Ed Sweeney of his world, a world as strange to most of us, as complete and self-contained as that of Renaissance Italy. How typical of human nature is the incident of Sweeney leaving the poorhouse in a huff because the manager has suggested that he would have to do so if he wouldn't work. "I told his nibs I was going to hit the road. He said all right. I walked three miles along a hot dusty road with the sweat running out of the tops of my shoes and never made a darn sale . . . I was gone a few days and in the meantime found out he had no authority to tell me to hit the road." A feeble grasping at the shred of pride which would enable him to return.

This book was written with the ostensible purpose of improving the conditions in such institutions by telling some of the abuses and inefficiencies which are prevalent there. Whether or not it can accomplish anything in that direction except by the indirect method of telling the world about it and hoping that it in turn will do something, I do not know.

The illustrations also by the author are as interesting and amusing as the content, and as childishy crude.

—ESTHER GOULD.

This is truly the Golden Age of literature—so far as the rewards go. H. C. Witwer is reported to have received from a magazine \$3,000 for a 4,000-word travesty on "Ivanhoe" in a modern vein. Sir Walter Scott, who wrote the original novel "Ivanhoe" in something like 150,000 words, is reputed to have received only \$1,500 for it. Mr. Witwer's travesty is one of a series called "Classics in Slang," to be published in the fall under that title by G. P. Putnam's Sons.

The Canadian who amused himself taking a whack at the U. S. in "Where Freedom Falts" has revealed himself as Laurence Lyon, grandson of a Chief Justice of Canada. The book was published anonymously and the revelation made later, perhaps explainable by one of the headings in the book, "Murders in U. S. Double in Twenty-five Years."

Pot Shots at Pot Boilers

The phenomenal success of "Trader Horn" written by A. A. Horn, an unknown 72 year old South African, and edited by Ethelreda Lewis, is going to stir the sluggish ambitions of a number of people who have always realized what an interesting story the history of their life would make. The recognized fact that "truth is stranger than fiction" makes every man's life a potential literary masterpiece but so few of us have the "giftie gie us" to see ourselves as others see us. To many this realization of their incipient comedy of errors is tragic in its futility but they ordinarily have sense enough to see that, in literature, it is not so much what you say as how you say it . . . The Bacon-Shakespearean controversy over the authorship of "Poorhouse Sweeney" which was started by eastern critics who assert the book was written by Dreiser and not by Ed Sweeney whose name appears on the title page, cannot be very genuine. Mr. Dreiser sees reality and its intrinsic tragedy whereas Mr. Sweeney sees the essential comedy of the tragic real . . . Perhaps one of the most interesting debates in which everybody has at some time participated, is the pro and con of the respective virtues of the common (Oh, so very!) people as embodied in the writing of such luminaries as Dr. Frank Crane and Eddie Guest and the "thinking minority" over which Menck-en and his alter ego, Nathan, are so loquacious. Personally, we feel that if it is possible for anything to be more ludicrous than the boobesie, that possibility finds expression in the posturing intelligentsia. The foregoing is by way of being a divertissement on our reaction to "The Next Age of Man" by Albert E. Wiggman, in which he expounds mightily on the future of a race which has produced some five thousand worth while individuals out of the thirty billion persons who have lived since the dawn of history eight or ten thousand years ago. Cheering thought, eh wot? Mr. Wiggman has a well grounded reliance in the principle of aristocracy and his book is a precept for bigger and better individuals and a heated remonstrance against mass production. The mental aristocracy of which he writes is beyond attainment at our present stage of development but if the race is ever educated beyond its "humanness" and biological breeding comes into normal practice, we may circumvent the debilitation of that greatest leveller, Nature. Mr. Wiggman's supposition of the manner of future race suicide is as ingenious as it is intriguing. While speaking of entertaining the perennial 1 week-ender—and we find our friends inclined to be most vehement over this subject since the casualties of the Fourth—I might mention "Bronx Ballads," a volume on gay ballads with music (?) by Robert A. Simon. It is the best thing of its kind I have ever seen, both as a satire and pure fun. It is possible for you to laugh at the ballads and then, because you are so clever, laugh at yourself for finding them funny. In line with this same thought but more of a what-shall-I-read-on-the-train proposition is the "Week-End Library" which Doubleday Page & Co. have published for your convenience. It is a volume containing a right merry miscellany in the form of "The Constant Nymph," Don Marquis, Ferber, Tarkington, Morley, Milne and F. P. Adams. . . .

—B. B.