The Library Book Parade
WHEC
January 31, 1940
5:00 P.M.

Drums

Announcer: Here comes the Library Book Parade.

Provins:

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. This is LeRoy Provins leading the Library Book Parade, a weekly program about books and authors sponsored by the Rochester Public Library.

Twenty years ago this broadcast would not have been possible. I am not referring to the mechanics of broadcasting either; I am referring to the subject of the talk: H. L. Mencken. Twenty years ago the name H. L. Mencken was the proverbial red flag to the eyes of the righteous, the godly, the respectable. Certainly no public library that wanted to retain its respectability would entertain even remotely the idea of talking about the sage of Baltimore. In those now incredible times immediately following the World War, Mencken was a great force in the country; the measure of his importance can partially be judged by the measure of opposition and hate he inspired.

But today the story is different, almost pathetically so. Indeed, I would have no reason to talk about Mencken this afternoon were it not for one fact; that he has written the first installment of his autobiography, and has made of it an uncommonly good job. The book was published a week or so ago under the title, "Happy days," and recounts only his first twelve years of life. You may immediately ask with justice why any man's early youth is worth an entire book; my answer is that no man's youth is worth that much reading. What Mencken does to justify his book is to

tell the story of his youth against the background of Baltimore from 1880 to 1892, or as a jacket blurb correctly claims, "This book offers the record, not only of the man whose name is signed to it, but also of a whole era, now fast fading into the shadows of forgotten history."

It will be widely read more for its link with the past than because of its revelations about its author. It will have the same appeal that "Country Lawyer" by Bellamy Partridge has; and to my mind, "Happy days" is definitely superior to "Country Lawyer."

Mr. Mencken has this to say about his own book, "It has, so far as I can make out, no psychological, sociological, or politco-economic significance. My early life was placid, secure, uneventful and happy. I remember, of course, some griefs and alarms, but they were trivial and vanished quickly. There was never an instant in my childhood when I doubted my father's capacity to resolve any difficulties that menaced me, or to beat off any danger. He was always the center of his small world, and in my eyes a man of endless power and resourcefulness. I was a larva of the comfortable and complacent bourgeoisie, though I was quite unaware of the fact until I was along in my teens, and had begun to read indignant books."

In his speculation over whether or not he will continue his life story, Mr. Mencken reflects thus on his sixty years: he writes, "If I had my life to live over again I don't think I'd change it in any particular of the slightest consequence. I'd choose the same parents, the same birthplace, the same education (with maybe a few improvements here, chiefly in the direction of foreign languages,) the same trade, the same jobs, the same

income, the same politics, the same wife, the same friends, and (even though it may sound like a mere effort to shock humahity), the same relatives."

That is Mr. Mencken's judgment of his life; no matter what you and I may think of it, he is obviously satisfied.

After a first chapter telling of his introduction to the universe, Mr. Mencken begins the story of his early education. He attended "F. Knapp's Institute, a seminary that catered to the boys and girls of the Baltimore middle-class for more than sixty years. It was already beginning, in 1886, to feel the competition of the public schools, but Professor Knapp was not alarmed, for he firmly believed, and often predicted, that the public schools would collapse soon or late under the weight of their own inherent and incurable infamy. They were fit, he argued freely, only for dealing with boys too stupid, too lazy, too sassy or too dirty to be admitted to such academies as his own. As for sending girls to them, he simply could not imagine it; as well shame and degrade the poor angels by cutting off their pigtails or putting them into pants."

Aside from his violent dislike of the public school, Mencken remembers his first professor as a "very mild and even amiable man, and much more diligent at praise than at blame. The front of his coat was dusty with chalk, and his hands so caked with it that he had to blow it off every time he took snuff." The old professor, in the days when Mencken knew him, had begun to restrict his personal teaching to a few extra abstruse subjects, such as fractions, but he always lined up all the boys for inspection in the morning, and he led both the boys and girls

in the singing that opened every day's session. The songs were chiefly German favorites of the professor's youth...most of the pupils knew very little German, though they were taught it fiercely, but they all managed to sing the songs.

Mr. Mencken spends considerable time writing about his boyhood school days, and particularly well does he remember the annual picnic that students, teachers, and parents all attended. It was the one time in the year when he could eat all the hot dogs and drink all the sarsaparilla that he wanted. To these outings General Ferdinand C. Latrobe, Mayor of Baltimore for seven terms always came to make a speech. Since the professor was German, the mayor devoted himself courteously to whooping up the unparalleded virtues of the German people, and to revealing the fact that he was partly German. Mencken says that in later years when he was newspaper reporter, he heard the good mayor make speeches claiming not only Irish, Scotch, Welsh, Dutch and other such relatively plausible bloods, but also Polish, Bohemian, Lithuanian, Italian, Swedish, Greek, Spanish and even Jewish. Unable by the current mores to boast of African ancestry, he consoled his Negro customers by speaking highly of Lincoln, whom he described as a Republican with a Democratic ear. The best he could do for the Chinese was to quote the analects of Confucius.

"The Baltimore of the eighties," writes Mr. Mencken, "was a noisy town, for the impact of iron wagon tires on hard cobble-stones was almost like that of a hammer on an anvil." Surprisingly he adds that "in every way city life was much noisier then than it is now." Grass grew between the cobblestones, but not because of any change in political administrations. "Baltimoreans of that

era took a fierce, defiant pride in the (rural) aspects of their city. They would boast that it was the only great seaport on earth in which dandelions grew in the streets in spring. They believed that all such vegetation was healthful, and kept down chills and fevers."

On the whole, Baltimore of that era was the most admired city in the country; visiting Englishmen who had only harsh words for New York and Boston, found Baltimore to their liking. Particularly was the food good, and Mr. Mencken has never forgotten it and never lost his interest in it. He is today famous as gourmet, and to be invited to dine with him is an experience never forgotten. Shad roe was given away in Baltimore in the eighties, and any man could easily catch enough crabs to feed his family for two days. When the price of a shad large enough to feed an entire family was raised from forty to fifty cents, young Mencken's father predicted: the "Republic will never survive the Nineteenth Century." One of the author's particular pleasure of eating as a child was stewed blackberries, spread while still warm on home-made bread, also still warm."

Perhaps the only unusual or peculiar thing about H. L. Mencken as a little boy he tells in his chapter, Larval Stage of a Bookworm. It is this: he could not read the dime novels so popular then with most boys. A friend who aspired to be a train robber urged him to try them, but they only made him laugh. Horatio Alger and Oliver Optic could not hold him for more than the first few pages. It was not until he found in his father's book case a set of Mark Twain that his real reading career began. The discovery of "Huckleberry Finn," he writes, was probably the most stupendous event of his life.

In "Happy days" H. L. Mencken tells a great deal about his boyhood and the environment in which he spent it. It's a humorous, good natured, and above all, a happy story. You may not care a hoot about H. L. Mencken, but you can still be enthusiastic over his story, "Happy days." And as one critic remarks, he feels almost impertinent when he reminds you that a book by Mencken is well and distinctively written.

Mr. Mencken has written many other books; in fact, he has largely spent his life and earned his living by words. For the greater number of his years he has been a journalist, identified with the Baltimore Sun. He, along with George Jean Nathan began the magazine American Mercury in 1924, and Mencken remained as editor until 1933.

The influence of H. L. Mencken reached its zenith in the few years immediately following the World War. He was the great cynic, the unbeliever who scoffed and mocked at all the taboos, the prejudices, the pet beliefs of traditional America. Louis Kronenberger says that Mencken's biting mockery of those who made our laws, our culture, and our social sanctions electrified an age that had few pioneers. College professors, shocked at his view of life and insulted by his view of themselves, virtually regarded him as Antichrist. Women's clubs put off discussing him from year to year. Right-thinking business men disposed of him as a Bolshevik." The new generation produced by the war, however, accepted him as their spokesman of disbelief. He quickly won an enormous following.

By his attacks on many outmoded and hypocritical beliefs and institutions, Mencken undoubtedly accomplished a great deal in hastening changed and corrections. Critics of Mencken's life

who survey it now from this calm present say there were two principal defects. These defects have largely caused his now obscure and unimportant part in American life. First, his whole attitude was one of amused, indifferent contempt. What he liked was the noise and the fun of battle. The outcome of the battle never interested him. He had no program to suggest for America, and he encouraged no one else to attempt a program. This attitude of complete negation was not made of enduring stuff.

The second defect was this: as time went on, H. L. Mencken's tone became one of unredeemed cynicism. He became a man who did not want to believe anything. He could attack all sides of all questions with equal venom. He appeared too much in the role of the man who must disagree with and shock the world at the expense of any idea, good or bad, noble or ignoble. Mencken as a critic and cynic can best and most easily be read in his series of Prejudices; I think there are six books in the series. Perhaps, however, we shall all find a new interest in this remarkable man's life if he continues to tell the story of it himself.

He has written one book which will endure as long as the English language is spoken. That book is "The American Language." It is the best book that can be had on the development of the English language in America. It is at one and the same time a piece of thorough, scientific scholarship, and a highly diverting, entertaining volume to read. Clifton Fadiman once said of "The American language" that it's "Bangful of sound logic, sound humor, sound taste and sound prose." Harry Hansen in the World-Telegram adds that it is the "most reliable, informing and entertaining book ever written about the words we use, the way we speak, and

how these words betray us."

"The American language" was first published in 1919, and has now gone through four editions, the latest in 1936, when it was almost entirely rewritten. In his first three editions, Mencken argued that the differences between American English and British English would go on increasing. It is interesting to note that he has changed his mind. He writes that the "Englishman of late has yielded so much to American example, in vocabulary, in idiom, in spelling and even in pronounciation, that what he speaks promises to become, on some not too remote tomorrow, a kind of dialect of American, just as the language spoken by the American was once a dialect of English. If only by the force of numbers, the Americans are bound to exert a dominant influence upon the course of the common language hereafter."

I suggest that some acquaintance with "The American Language" by H. L. Mencken would be interesting to a great many people.

The Library Book Parade
WHEC
December 2, 1939
10:15 A.M.

Drums

Announcer: Here comes the Library Book Parade.

Provins:

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. This is LeRoy Provins leading the Library Book Parade, a weekly program about books and authors sponsored by the Rochester Public Library.

I left the Main Library building only a few minutes ago and I now feel a great deal like a sedate Santa Claus. I am sorry that I didn't ask the sound effects man for a string of sleigh bells to keep beside me here at the desk so that I could rattle them occasionally. The reason for all this Christmas exuberance on the part of a librarian is the combined Christmas show ready to open in the Main Library Monday morning, and I have just left the hustle and bustle of its preparation. Only a side-show barker dressed in a Santa Claus outfit would be sufficient right now -- someone who could cry, "Hurry, hurry, hurry to the combined Christmas show in the Main Library, 115 South Avenue -- Admission free, as usual." But that's just the carnival in me warring with the library.

Let me take you back a bit in the history of this affair. A good many weeks ago John Adams Lowe, the Director of Libraries, invited the garden clubs of the city to bring into the Main Library next week their ideas for Christmas decorations for the home. These decorations were to be inexpensive, and as far as possible were to be new and intelligent in their uses of materials. Mr. Lowe hoped that an exhibit of these holiday decorations would

serve two purposes: it would be attractive and interesting to look at, and it would be useful to others simply to copy or as inspiration to accomplish other individual decorations. Well, seventeen garden clubs accepted the invitation and next week will help make the library building festive. Part of the decorations will be in the wall cases that line the second floor; don't overlook those.

The second part of the Christmas show is books. When we learned of the Christmas decorations, we decided to add to the spirit of the week by arranging an exhibit of books. Books which we would suggest as Christmas gifts for the whole family from the child who still limits himself to looking at pictures up to grandmother who may want to read the latest novel or find a new quilting pattern, all depending on grandmother. Between the Christmas books and the Christmas decorations in the main hall, the library mood is distinctly a holiday one.

So far I have seen only one exhibit of the Christmas decorations, since the others are not yet in place. That one is by the Cloverdale Garden Club, and if the others impress me as much as it, then I am sure that for me at least the whole idea will be a success. In one of the second floor wall cases, the Cloverdale Club has placed a wreath and two pieces which I am told are swags, long spray-like affairs that one hangs on the wall or in the glass panels of doorways. They sound rather ordinary, but I assure you they are not. They are beautiful creations in the well known but distinctive style of the old Florentine sculptor, della Robbia. You know his terra cotta creations, most familiar his bambino in swaddling clothes set in a circular plaque.

Well, first, the Cloverdale Club ladies have made their pieces out of the leaves of the hemlock and the cedar, strong, dark green leaves. And then, in artistic arrangement, they have woven into the leaves real fruits -- persimmons, prickly pears, pomegrantes, lemons, grapes, and kumquats. These fruits have been dipped in white shellack to preserve them, and they ought to last through the Christmas season. It's difficult to give you an idea of the original beauty of these creations, but I can tell you how much they cost the ladies to make-- $2.35.

In all, there are to be 17 clubs. I have no hesitation in inviting all of you to make a special trip to the library this coming week simply to see the Christmas decorations for your homes that the Garden Clubs suggest.

As beautiful as they are, however, I leave the garden club half of the show with some satisfaction and turn to the books that we suggest as Christmas gifts. I am on much safer ground when I talk about books -- I know what a book is, and sometimes what it is about, but I'm still doubtful about that spray being called a swag.

The first collection of books that I looked at last night before leaving the library to go home and worry because I was late in thinking about this Saturday morning talk, was a miscellaneous group of readable and giveable fiction and non-fiction. Books light and entertaining, books heavy and instructive. Among the fiction, is a group of recent detective and mystery stories. That's the first time I have ever been able to mention detective or mystery stories on the radio, and how satisfying it is. Ordinarily, librarians look the other way, at least publicly, when they are mentioned, but

Christmas is no time to try to reform anybody's literary tastes or pleasures. If your friends and relatives like those stories of crime and detection, Christmas is the time to humor them, not lecture them.

But not all of them, even to the most hopeless addict, are worth reading, and we have suggested some of the recent best ones. There is, for instance, "Mr. Pinkerton at the Old Angel" by David Frome, another in the series of adventures of the little Welshman who is always running away from trouble, but who as invariably bumps into a murder as he rounds the last corner. Mr. Pinkerton I shall always remember as made up of three elements: his worship of Inspector Bull of the C.I.D.; his haunting fear that the ghost of his dead but unlamented wife will confront him when he spends a shilling of her money; and his idea that America is that last land of the bizarre and the adventurous.

Another mystery in this group is "The crying sisters" by Mabel Seeley, at least a better than average title of its kind. A librarian starts out on her annual summer vacation, rebellious because life is dull and the prospects of its ever becoming livelier are nil. But when she inexplicably accepts an unknown man's offer to act as nursemaid to his child, she becomes involved in murder and robbery and eventually romance. The situation is tense and mysterious throughout the book, and though you may not believe the story you won't stop reading it.

Some of the straight novels in the group I have read, some I haven't. Somerset Maugham's "Christmas holiday" is there, an

important novel by one of the most prominent English writers. I might warn you not to be deluded by the title; "Christmas holiday" is not a story of a happy family gathering aroung the hearth reading Dicken's "Christmas carol" to one another. It is the thoughtful story of a young Englishman who goes to Paris to spend his holiday, intending to have one fine, boisterous time all alone in the big city. Instead, he receives a series of shocks to his preconceived way of thinking, to his values of life. By the time he gets back home, the bottom has dropped out of his world. For the adult who reads a great deal and is interested in contemporary problems of life, "Christmas holiday" would be an intelligent gift.

"The Nazarene" by Sholem Asch is a literary tour de force; a novel based on the life of Christ. To many people it might be a stimulating and appreciated gift. Sophisticated and witty, is "Kitty Foyle" by Christopher Morley -- I reviewed that on an earlier program, and would only remind you again that Mr. Morley's latest book is not in the tradition of sweetness and light, it is the frequently frank story of a modern young girl and her problems.

Among the non-fiction books, there are titles to please all tastes, ages, and pocket-books. Clifton Fadiman has edited a book called "I believe," a collection of personal credos of well known thoughtful people. In this confused world, it is undoubtedly interesting to know to what permanent values and beliefs other people anchor themselves. "I believe" is not light reading, and requres time and patience, but is rewarding. Perhaps for the same kind of person, the one with a thoughtful

mind, is this book, "The bible of the world," edited by Robert Ballou. It is a condensed translation of the beliefs and aspirations of the great world religions--Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Confucianism and Christianity.

Rochester ought to provide many people who like books on music as Christmas gifts. One of the outstanding recent ones is "Men of music" by Wallace Brockway, a book which assumes some intelligence but no technical knowledge on the part of the reader. Beginning with a chapter on the forerunners of Bach, "Men of music" continues to discuss in some detail seventeen of the greatest composers. On the word of those who know better than I, "Men of music" is a book to be read by the music lover.

Now, when anyone asks a friend for advice on what to buy a third person for Christmas, the friend usually says, "Well, now, if I were getting the gift I would like"... and so on. In that same way, I say that if I were to be given a book for Christmas I would prefer to have some permanent reference book for my home library. And other people who read a great deal may feel like me. For that reason, one part of our Christmas exhibit is made up of reference books for the home. Probably no one person would want or need all of them, they are merely suggestive, and in any event librarians in the reference division will be glad to talk with you about the best books to fill your particular need. One of the books in the exhibit that I particularly covet is the "Columbia encyclopedia," a one volume encyclopedia prepared and published by Columbia University. When it was first on the market several years ago, it was criticized for some omissions and mistakes, and these have been at least partially corrected

in a second printing. It is, however, without doubt one of the best and most complete one-volume reference books you can have in your home. Then there is an atlas in the collection; the one we suggest as inexpensive and reliable is the Rand McNally Standard Atlas, although there are others that can be substituted. Bartlett's "Familiar quotations" in the new Christopher Morley edition is there, too; certainly a valuable book to anyone who either reads or writes much. Other volumes in the home library collection of reference books are a good one volume edition of Shakespeare, the Victor books of the opera and the symphony, Norma Taylor's "Garden dictionary," and the "Standard book of British and American verse."

For persons who like books about foreign countires and the people in them, we have devoted one section of the Christmas exhibit to books around the world. Whether you want a book about the foreign political situation or a pleasant travel story, you will find suggestions in this section. One of the best, which I hope to discuss in greater detail next week, is Agnes Keith's "Land below the wind," her delightfully human account of four year's residence in North Borneo as the American wife of a British official. Mrs. Keith writes about many different phases of her life--the apes she kept as pets, the strange retinue of servants which at times helped her and other times hindered her, her adventurous trips with her husband into the interior or to the neighboring island, the problems of housekeeping in a country where termites eat all the furniture and servants break all the glassware. "Land below the wind" is a book that ought to be a delightful present to most anybody, men included. For the seafaring

man, either in actuality or in his dreams, there is a big book to put beneath the Christmas tree, "Cape Horn" by Felix Riesenberg. To sail around the tip of South America in the old days was the final test of a good ship and a good sailor; in this book Felix Riesenberg tells the exciting stories of the great voyages around Cape Horn from the early days of the European explorers to his own. And especially good for the youthful amateur sailor, is Dwight Long's "Seven seas on a shoestring," the naive tale of a young man who sailed many thousand miles because he had great ambition and a very small schooner. If you give "Seven seas on a shoe-string" to your son and he runs away from home to be a sailor, please don't blame me. Another title in this group of books around the world is a voyage in reverse---an Englishman's account of his coming to the United States and what he discovered; it's "I lost my English accent" by G. V. R. Thompson. Mr. Thompson came to America as a newspaper correspondent in the days of prohibition so he remembers our country first as a country of speakeasies where enormous prices were charged for terrifying drinks. It's an amusing book, something of an answer to last season's "With malice toward all."

Still other groups of books that we have to suggest appropriate Christmas gifts to you are books for homemakers---cook books, home mechanics, volumes on interior decoration, etc; books to help you with your hobbies; and finally exceptional books that can be purchased for little money, and titles in unusually attractive, fine editions.

Aside from the adult books, there is an exhibition of books for children and young people. Now I am not qualified to talk about them, but if there is one problem of book purchasing which

needs expert assistance it most surely is the problem of buying children's books. Out of the hundreds of titles published these days for children, our Department of Work with Children has made a careful selection. Simply by looking at their choice you may be able to make your own decisions, but should you want personal advice the librarians on the second floor will be happy to help you.

That then is the Christmas show in the Public Library opening next week at nine o'clock Monday morning--unusual decorations for the home suggested by the garden clubs, and books that you may want to give as Christmas gifts. For both or either reasons, I believe you will enjoy a visit.

And a word about the Rundel Gallery, too, before I leave. Two new shows come into it today. In the large gallery is an exhibition of impressionistic water colors by Lars Hoftrup, faculty member at Elmira College. I have read some reviews by New York critics of Mr. Hoftrup strong watercolors and they liked them very much. The second show in the print room is water colors by Virginia J. Smith, Rochesterian who painted them last summer during a European trip. She had been invited to exhibit them in Paris this fall, but the war will prevent that. The two shows together make a splendid collection of watercolors.

And now thank you and good day until next week at this same time.

The Library Book Parade
WHEC
December 16, 1939
1:30 P.M.

Drums:

Announcer: Here comes the Library Book Parade.

Provins:

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This is Leroy Provins leading the Library Book Parade, a weekly program about books and authors sponsored by the Rochester Public Library.

There is one thing in America which has always been collapsing and yet today stands as firmly as it ever did. No, I don't want to play games with you, I'm merely referring to the theatre. According to the pessimists, the American theatre is always in a serious decline; not so long ago, we were assured on every side that first the motion pictures and then the radio would quickly deal the death blow to the stage. And yet, in this year of theatrical grace Broadway as usual boasts its number of smash hits, its galaxy of stars and fine performers. The theatre, whether American or Russian, has a vitality that can never be curbed for very long. If it declines temporarily, it revives to become stronger than ever.

I have got myself into this conversation about the theatre because last night I read a new book, "Forty-five minutes past eight," by Ward Morehouse. It is the story of a thousand and one first nights on Broadway. Mr. Morehouse has for many years been a New York critic and columnist; the theatre has been his love and his business. He writes about it with enthusiasm, warmth and frankness. I like the first page of this book by Ward Morehouse; it tells so much so briefly. This is part of it:

"The train for the North left Atlanta at 2:30 p.m. in the late fall of 1919. The next noon I got my first glimpse of New York, registered at the Hotel McAlpin, hurried to the Tribune Office, was instantly hired at $50 a week, and within an hour was off on my first assignment. I was to interview Marcus Garvey about his dream ship to Africa. There'd been high talk of the founding of a black republic; Garvey was being hailed as a New Moses and a Black Christ. I eventually got to Harlem but not to Marcus Garvey. My reception wasn't cordial and persistence resulted in my being almost catapulted down the stairway. I took a cab to the Penn Station, but there wasn't a train for forty minutes. Somewhat desperately I returned to (the Tribune) and told City Editor Macfarland that I didn't like it and was going back South. Macfarland grinned. He explained that they generally tried Harlem on reporters from the South and perhaps I might fare better in Chinatown."

Now, there's the way to tell a story. What do we have? His origins, his ambition, success, disillusionment and despair, and then his determination to persevere, and all in the first page. After reading that in 1919 Ward Morehouse as a young man could get a job in a few minutes at $50 per week, I began to hunt for the part in which he married the boss's daughter. But that wasn't what happened. He worked his way, instead, up to the eminence of a drama critic. Speaking seriously, though, the author says that "the job of critic of a New York newspaper, or a magazine of standing, is one of the most difficult in the world to get. There are only a few such jobs; there are thousands and thousands of people who would like to have them and who feel that they have

all the qualifications for filling them. Rarely, indeed, is anyone made a critic against his will. Critics are seldom fired, and only for extreme cause. The New York critics organized themselves into a Circle a few years ago, you may remember; a close, exclusive group of seventeen members only. They "have taken something of a naive pride in their organization, although they're all a little amazed that it could have held together this long."

Perhaps because the critics go to all the first nights is one of the reasons they are so much envied. I have known several people whose one ambition was to be present at just one important opening in New York--to be in the theatre just one time when an important play was presented for the first time. Of course, if you would listen to Alexander Woolcott, you would think yourself fortunate not to be an habitue of the first nights: He says, "I reviewed plays for thirteen years and I quit because I didn't want to spend the rest of my life in that company. Where can you find a gathering as dreary, as ruthless and as moronic as you do at a Broadway first night,"

Dreary? Moronic? Ruthless? The adjectives belong to Alexander Woolcott. Mr. Morehouse reminds us that Woolcott, more than anyone else, "seemed to get greatest enjoyment from premiere festivities. Regardless of how the play happened to go, the stage of Phalanx, N. J., could always be depended upon to give a swell show on his own side of the footlights."

The personnel of a New York first night of any importance is remarkably constant. Ward Morehouse says that, if he took a deep breath, he could unfalteringly go into a chant of the people seen at premieres. A producer was once able to guess with only one

mistake all the people who had attended a certain premiere, at which he, the producer, had not been present. "The First Lady of the First Nights" is, of course, Mrs. Katzenberg. Once you've attended a few New York premieres, you begin to look for her and you always find her, down there in Row A or AA. She's frail and blondish gray, and she goes in excessively for powder and rouge. She's been first-nighting for twenty years...and that, she will tell you, "is the only thing I spend money on." The producer of a play arranges the seating very carefully for an opening night; he always avoids putting the wrong people near an important critic. A noisy person who laughs too much will disturb and possibly annoy the critic; a blase person with a dead pan face may influence the critic by dampening his enthusiasm for the play, if he has any. On the whole, producers like quiet, pleasant people who can occupy the seats without being conspicuous.

In 1934 Ward Morehouse asked three hundred people for the ten best plays of their lifetime. The three plays which received the most votes were "Hamlet" by William Shakespeare; "Rain" by John Colton and Clemence Randolph; and "What price glory?" by Maxwell Anderson and Laurence Stallings. He conducted another symposium on what actor or actress has given the performance most memorable to you. Helen Hayes and Katharine Cornell head that list.

A book called "Letters to Mary," a collection of informal letters Miss Hayes' mother has written to her granddaughter, telling about Helen Hayes' life and career will soon be published. We shall have it in the Rochester Public Library when it is first available. About Katharine Cornell, however, there is considerable information. Just a few months ago her autobiography arrived, a delightful book called "I wanted to be an actress."

Miss Cornell was born in Buffalo, and received her theatrical blood from her father. He had been educated as a doctor, but soon abandoned the profession to manage a theatre used by traveling shows and stock companies. When Katharine Cornell was a small girl, she first was more interested in becoming a trapeze artist than anything else; it was only when Maude Adams as Peter Pan played her father's theatre, that she determined some day to become an actress.

It was an up-hill fight for her. She was not beautiful in any conventional way, and was almost abnormally shy. After she made the first plunge, Jessie Bonstelle of Rochester fame was her principal guide and support. And then she married Guthrie McClintic in Coburg, Ontario, across the lake from us. They have been a happy couple and a great help to each other professionally. There is that old threadbare story, you know, about the young casting director named Guthrie McClintic who went one night to see a play in which the young and unknown Katharine Cornell appeared; when he filed his program away in the morning, opposite Miss Cornell's name he penciled three words: The words were: "monotonous, interesting, watch." And he's still watching her as her husband and director.

"I wanted to be an actress" ought to appeal particularly to you who like Katharine Cornell and have seen her on the stage, Her book tells how she chose and rehearsed her plays, and relates anecdotes about the thousands of performances she has given crossing and recrossing the United States. It tells why Katharine Cornell has never accepted an offer to appear in the movies or on the radio, although she likes both forms of entertainment. She reveals with good taste the intimate personal side of her life, her happiness and

friendliness. And, then, there are good stories--I like the one she tells about snubbing Greta Garbo. At a matinee performance of the Barrets of Wimpole Street a mysterious woman was present who looked like the great Swedish actress; after the performance, this woman came back stage to see Miss Cornell, who had decided that the woman was an imposter and playing a practical joke. Katharine Cornell refused to see the woman, who left, muttering, "Miss Cornell does not like strangers." Then began a furious phoning to the coast to learn if Garbo was actually in New York and had she come to the play that afternoon. Finally, Miss Cornell learned that the woman had actually been Greta Garbo; a note of apology was immediately sent along with an invitation to dinner. Garbo accepted. Miss Cornell says "Garbo turned out to be as delightful, as charming, as simple and as humorous a person as you could imagine. No attitudes, no pose, no star temperament--and such extraordinary beauty--especially when she smiles." That is Katharine Cornell's description of Greta Garbo; it would have been a rare experience to see those two great actresses sitting together, talking until four o'clock in the morning, as they did.

The critic, John Mason Brown, has written a delightful and thoughtful letter to Katharine Cornell. It appears in a book by him called "Letters from greenroom ghosts." This book uses the same idea Walter Savage Landor used in his "Imaginary conversations," the idea of having the long ago dead talk with or write to the living. In Brown's book Sarah Siddons, England's great tragic muse, writes to Katharine Cornell; the other correspondents whom his fancy have linked are Peg Woffington to Ina Claire, Christopher Marlowe to Eugene O'Neill, Richard

Brinsley Sheridan to Noel Coward, and Inigo Jones to Robert Edmond Jones.

From the wisdom of her own career, and perhaps, from her now far-seeing place in the other world, Mrs. Siddons gives advice to Katharine Cornell: This is part of it:

"You have merited the high position which is yours, and stand now on the threshold of true importance. Never lose your interest in the work of your contemporary dramatists, but make certain your contemporaries are at least your peers. Remember, too, that the great parts of the past and present still await you--Lady Macbeth, Cleopatra, Hedda, Madame Revanesky and a score of others. They need your illumination as much as you need theirs.

"My conviction is that you have potentialities for tragedy in you which are untouched. I hope I am right when I maintain that you have not yet become the personage of whom you are now no more than an exciting prophecy. And I can only conclude by saying to you as Sir Joshua said to me when I attended him for the first sitting and he took my hand to lead me to the dais. 'Ascend your undisputed throne, and graciously bestow upon me some good idea of the Tragic Muse.'

"Believe me, Madam, your respectful admirer and most humble servant, S. Siddons."

"Letters from greenroom ghosts" by John Mason Brown is a charming book, combining information of the past and present theatre in what I can legitimately call a quaint fashion.

Katharine Cornell says she dislikes practical jokes on the stage; the only one she ever played was on her husband when she deliberately prevented him from reading a newspaper in which he

had pasted his lines. And well might she dislike practical jokes; an epidemic of them in a cast has been known to cause the show to close.

There is the oyster trick among the commoner examples of tricks that make actors die young. This consists of one actor shaking hands with an oyster in his palm and transferring it to the hand of another player in the scene. The actor will probably have a long scene to play after this and not be able to get rid of it till he makes his exit. If he is a novice, the fact that he doesn't know what it is helps the fun.

The phone trick consists of simply connecting a dead stage phone to, let's say, the cellar; and when the poor actor who has a scene with a telephone on the stage picks up the receiver to have a long talk with himself, he is confronted by a voice. A voice, after months of silence, which fills in all those long, studied gaps with irrelevant and impish answers, and knocks all those favorite little nuances and clever tricks and twists into a cocked hat.

But the most amusing example of the horrible things that can happen on the stage concerns the late Lewis James, a notorious practitioner of stage jokes. The night before the opening of a massive musical show it was discovered that there was a lull of a few minutes while scenery was shifted. Mr. James, the star comedian, agreed to step before the front curtain and entertain the audience for those minutes, by talking with someone.

Turning to a young actor, he said, "Cyril, I'll use you. We'll just say anything that comes into our heads..you know, anything to keep them amused."

The young man, who had a small part and was new to the stage was thoroughly terrified at the idea and begged James to use someone else.

"Think nothing of it," said the star, "leave it all to me. I'll do the talking; you just answer the questions."

Entreaties were in vain. So the young man spent a sleepless night, and as the next day wore on and this particular scene drew nearer, his blood proportionately congealed.

Finally came the moment when they were waiting in the wings for the scene before theirs to end. "What are you going to ask me first?" came the haggard whisper from Cyril.

"Oh, I haven't thought yet. Don't worry, my lad."

"What's the subject going to be, then? Tell me something, please."

"I don't know. Sh! It's us."

The music stopped, and out onto the stage strode the comedian, followed by a pounding heart in the semblance of a young man. They reached the center--stopped. The elder man turned to the younger:

"And now, Cyril," said he, "let's have your story."

My story, ladies and gentlemen, has been about these books:

Forty-five minutes after eight, by Ward Morehouse.

I wanted to be an actress, by Katharine Cornell.

and

Letters from greenroom ghosts, by John Mason Brown.

I am happy to say that beginning next week the Library Book Parade will come to you at a new, and we hope, more convenient time, The new time is 5 o'clock, on Wednesday afternoons. And so, until next Wednesday at 5 p.m., thank you and good day.

The LIBRARY BOOK PARADE broadcast for December 23, 1939 was a presentation by LeRoy G. Provins of a radio version of "In Clean Hay" by Eric P. Kelley, prepared by Julia L. Sauer.

L. G. Provins

The Library Book Parade
WHEC
December 27, 1939
5:00 P.M.

Drums:

Announcer: Here comes the Library Book Parade.

Provins:

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This is LeRoy Provins leading the Library Book Parade, a weekly program about books and authors sponsored by the Rochester Public Library.

The French philosopher, Voltaire, once said that Heaven gave two things to counterbalance the miseries of life--hope and sleep. To these he should have added a third--laughter. Everyone is familiar with accounts of how Lincoln used to tell funny stories at cabinet meetings during the Civil War, and how some of the members of the cabinet objected to such levity in the face of serious problems. We know now that Lincoln's sense of humor was a balance wheel to keep him steady, and to keep him going. Humor often does just that. It helps to keep men sane; it drives away the blues; it eases up a strained situation; it oils the machinery of life.

A woman named Beatrice Thomas has written an invocation to Puck, the mischievous fairy, in which she expresses better than I can our need of laughter. This is the last stanza of that poem:

Puck, you elf, you wisely merry fairy,
What have you to do with solemn men?
You so foot it, airiest of the airy,
That we catch you only now and then.
Earnest, somber-browed, we follow after
You, who fly a-mocking from the ruck;
O we have a desperate need of laughter!
Give us laughter, Puck!

I don't intend now to let myself in for a discussion of humor; a discussion of what makes certain things amusing and other things

not amusing. That is a problem which has occupied the minds of many people--Sigmund Freud, Max Eastman, and Henri Bergson, for example. The science of humor is interesting, but to me, humor itself, without the science, is better for my purposes.

I have this afternoon the books of three men, all of them humorous poets. Arthur Guiterman, Franklin P. Adams, and Samuel Hoffenstein. I can't very well discuss the books in general terms, so I shall probably spend most of my time reading their poetry.

Of the three, Arthur Guiterman is best known as a poet. His books, and there are many of them, are all remarkably good. When asked how it was that his verse was so uniformly good, Guiterman replied that he had never written anything of which he himself did not approve, and that he had never attempted to write beyond his means.

Guiterman was born of American parents in Vienna, Austria, in 1871. His mother, a native of Ohio, was so worried that her son might not have American citizenship, that within twenty-four hours after his birth, he was registered at the American Consulate. Educated in this country, Arthur Guiterman soon became engaged in literary and journalistic work; but for many years now, he has been a free-lance poet. He is one of the few who make enough money to live on from their poetry. In the old magazine, Life, Guiterman originated the rhymed reviews that have been so widely copied. He did one about himself once, and this is part of it:

The subject of this little sketch
  Is famed as metricist and scholar;
His very autograph will fetch
  A dime, the tenth part of a dollar.

Among his works are, "Chips of jade,"
"The laughing muse," "The mirthful lyre,"
His Car of Songs can make the grade,
But sometimes needs an extra tire.

He's fond of rhymes, aloof and shy,
Especially the rhyme for "window;"
And if you ask the reason, -why
His wife's sweet name is "Vida Lindo."

He loves the wooded mountain camp,
He loves a set of tennis dearly,
He loves to skate, canoe and tramp,
And signs his letters, "Yours sincerely."

That is Arthur Guiterman's rhymed description of himself. A friend of his once tried to improve the situation by writing this couplet:

"There ain't no better, fitter man
Than Mister Arthur Guiterman."

A person who interviewed Guiterman says that he "differs from most other poets not only in possessing an abnormally developed sense of humor, but also in being able to make a comfortable living out of the sale of verse." He, however, by no means advises all able young poets to expect their poetry to provide them with board and lodging. His belief is that a writer ought to use both the prose and verse forms of expression, choosing the form which better suits his subject and approach. In summarizing his advice to poets, Guiterman gave a list of negative commandments.

"Don't think of yourself as a poet, and don't dress the part."

"Don't call your quarters a garret or a studio."

"Don't think of any class of work that you feel moved to do as either beneath you or above you."

"Don't complain of lack of appreciation. In the long run no really good published work can escape appreciation."

"Don't speak of poetic license, or believe that there is any such thing."

"Don't -- don't write hymns to the great gof Pan. He is dead; let him rest in peace!"

"Don't write what everybody else is writing."

Arthur Guiterman's newest volume of verse is "Lyric laughter," containing many new poems and favorite old ones.

If any of you look with jaundiced eye on the coming new year, your favorite selection in "Lyric laughter" will be the Pessimists Calendar.

To further some malignant plan,
The gloomy year begins in
JAN.

Misfortune spins her spiderweb
For your entanglement in
FEB.

You know what income taxes are;
Remember, one is due in
MAR.

It's ten to one some foolish japer
Will maim you on the first of
APR.

Beware the mild, deceptive day!
You're bound to catch a cold in
MAY.

Hayfever-time is coming soon;
You'll have a hint of that in
JUN.

No saving breeze will gently cool
The hot humidity of
JUL.

Though one may taste the tough quahaug,
No oysters in the month of
AUG.

Whatever tears you haven't wept
Already, are reserved for
SEPT.

And if one month is overstocked
With dire calamity, it's
OCT.

In vain your furnace, hearth and stove
Will strive against the chill of
NOV.

With none to mourneits drear decease,
The horrid year expires in
DEC.

To maintain this sad mood, here is an Ode to the First of Any Month, but particularly appropriate right now when the Christmas gifts must be paid for:

The melancholy day has come,
The saddest of the month,
When bills are due and hearts are glum,
That mournful day, the Oneth!

Arthur Guiterman, judging by the last picture I saw of him, is almost completely bald-headed. Therefore, this poem called Consolation for Baldness, must have an intensive personal meaning:

What's the advantage of hair, anyhow?
It blows in your eyes and it flops on your brow,
Disguising the shape of your scholarly head;
It often is gray and to sometimes is red.
Perhaps it is golden and ringleted, but
It needs to be combed and it has to be cut,
And even at best it is nothing to boast of
Because it's what barborous men have the most of;
Then challenge your mirror, defiant and careless,
For lots of our handsomest people are hairless.

Several of Arthur Guiterman's best known poems are too long to read on this library program; poems like "The Antiseptic Baby and the Prophylactic Pup," "The Quest of the Ribband," and "The Legend of the First Cam-u-el." Some of his poems are more serious and thoughtful, but these, like his lighter ones, are written in an easy, unstrained style. As an illustration of his less humorous verse, here are the first and last stanzas of a poem called "Acknowledgement."

Brave world of wind and weather,
Stern world of blame and praise,
How long we've been together
In good and evil days!

You reared men and you bred me
  Among your milling throngs,
You clothed me, housed me, fed me;
  I sang you little songs.

Grim world of strife and hardship,
  Sweet world of love and glee,
When I resign my bardship
  How large my debt will be!
You gave me sport and laughter,
  You gave me work and sleep.
I wonder if hereafter
  You'll say I earned my keep?
You give the joy of living
  And noble friends and true.
Dear world, for all your giving
  I'm much obliged to you.

Franklin P. Adams is best known by his initials, F.P.A. For many years he has been famous as the writer of The Conning Tower, a daily column that has been a feature of several New York City newspapers. And more recently, he has increased his fame by participating in a weekly radio program. F.P.A. once said that he writes so much about himself every day that he is weary of the subject. So, keeping the biographical data, at a minimum, I shall simply say that he was born in Chicago in 1881, spent one year in the University of Michigan, and in 1903 got his first job on a Chicago paper as columnist. His interest in verse was encouraged by reading Eugene Field; and like Guiterman, F.P.A. is now an accomplished poet.

A great deal of F.P.A.'s writings have been collected in books. I have here two of them, "Something else again," and the "Column book of F.P.A."

The latter book opens with this bit of practicality:

The rich man has his motorcar,
  His country and his town estate.
He smokes a fifty-cent cigar
  And jeers at fate.

He frivols through the livelong day,
  He knows not poverty her pinch.
His lot seems light, his heart seems gay,
  He has a cinch.

Yet though my lamp burns low and dim,
  Though I must slave for livelihood--
Think you that I would change with him?
  You bet I would.

One of F.P.A.'s amusing ideas was to speculate on what the copy desk of a newspaper would do to the themes of some of rather pompous well known poems of the past. For instance, take the theme of the poem "Excelsior" by Henry W. Longfellow. This is how that story of human striving after perfection would appear in our daily newspaper: the headlines are "Dog finds lad dead in drift." "Unidentified body of young traveler found by faithful hound near small Alpine village -- White mantle his snowy shroud."

And this is the reporter's story:

St. Bernard, Sept. 12 -- Early this morning a dog belonging to the St. Bernard Monastery discovered the body of a young man, half buried in the snow.

In his hand was clutched a flag with the word "Excelsior" printed on it.

It is thought that he passed through the village last night, bearing the banner, and that a young woman had offered him shelter, which he refused, having answered "Excelsior."

The police are working on the case."

F.P.A.'s peculiar kind of cleverness is most apparent in his parodies of the styles of other poets. Using the once popular song, "Yes, we have no bananas," which few people will ever forget, he speculates on the way A. E. Housman would have written that same story.

The cherry trees are laden
With berries ruby red,
And many a rose-lipped maiden
Lies in a lonely bed.

Of peaches there be plenty,
And apples acrid-sweet,
And many a lad of twenty
Straggles a starless street.

The grapes are big and bursting,
But plantains fair and gay,
For which the world is thirsting,
Are not for us today.

F.P.A. will parody anybody from Horace to Edgar A. Guest, and do it remarkably well. He is one of the most amusing and original writers of verse I know.

The third humorist on my list is Samuel Hoffenstein, who died several years ago. Although he was widely read, his reputation never equalled Guiterman's or F.P.A.'s. I have two books of Hoffenstein's--"Year in, year out," and "Poems in praise of practically nothing." Hoffenstein was inclined to wise-cracking and buffonery, but behind that there was often bitter irony and penetrating insight.

One section is headed "Love songs, at once tender and informative--an unusual combination in verses of this caracter."

Some of them are:

I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Were I not born to be in Dutch.

If you love me as I love you,
We'll both be friendly and untrue.

She walks in beauty, like the night!
And so she should, the parasite!

Those are the samples of the poetry of Samuel Hoffenstein. Books by him and the other two poets I have talked about, Arthur Guiterman and Franklin P. Adams, may be found in the collection of the Rochester Public Library.

Thank you and good day.

Jan 3

The Library Book Parade
WHEC

5:00 P.M.

Drums:

Announcer: Here comes the Library Book Parade.

Provins:

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This is LeRoy Provins leading the Library Book Parade, a weekly program about books and authors sponsored by the Rochester Public Library.

Did you know that eighty-five million Americans go to see a motion picture every week in the year? I did not know that before I began to read for this afternoon's talk, and I am still a bit overwhelmed by the number. Eighty-five million of anything is a lot of something.

The motion pictures have been an increasingly important part of our lifes for the last forty years, but we tend more and more to think of the movies not only as big business, but also as an art and a profound social influence. Certainly the movies are pre-eminently the people's art; no other art has ever been so shaped and influenced by its audience as has the cinema.

Margaret Thorpe has recently written a book called "America at the movies." In this diverting, spontaneous book, she tries to find out who these eighty-five million people are, why they go to the pictures, and what the pictures do to them. One of her conclusions is that "there is, apparently, not a phase of American life which the movies do not somewhere touch."

"From the (movie) industry's point of view the fundamental fact about the eighty-five million weekly movie-goers is that their

number is not nearly large enough. For one thing a great many of them are repeaters, people who go to the movies twice a week, three times, even five. Probably not more than forty million in the whole United States really have the movie habit, and we have a population of over one hundred and thirty million." The industry's problem, then, is to bring new people into the fold without losing any of the old customers. "The pearl of great price is the picture which pleases everybody; so far just two pearls have been found: Charlie Chaplin and Walt Disney." The pictures of those two men are acclaimed equally, but for different reasons, by your loftiest art critic and by the mythical man-on-the-street, who may not care a red cent for art in any shape or form.

"For the rest," Margaret Thorpe continues, "(the motion picture producer) must attempt to satisfy his audience in terms of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. The man he cares most greatly to please, the man to whose tastes and prejudices he pays most deferential attention, is the citizen with an income of more than one thousand five hundred dollars a year, and who lives in a city with a population of somewhere above fifty thousand. He is the movie's average man. From his pockets comes more than half the industry's revenue."

Actually, though, "he" is the wrong pronoun. It is really that solid average citizen's wife who commands the respectful attention of the industry. Margaret Thorpe says that "What the adult American female chiefly asks of the movies is the opportunity to escape by reverie from an existence which she finds insufficiently interesting... How can the American woman who buys her bread sliced and her peas shelled be expected to concoct her own reveries? At

the movies she gets them ready-made, put up in neat two-hour cans."

In "America at the movies," Margaret Thorpe continues her probing into the reasons why you and I go to the movies, and why we are more aware of certain ones than others. Although she has done a great deal of research and study for her book, she presents her findings to us in an easy, engaging and light fashion. She discusses the many and surprising publicity tie-ups that exhibitors can make; I like her story that a Boston manager publicized the picture called "The Hurricane" by taking out hurricane insurance on his theatre---and collecting it when the real tropic storm came up the coast and blew his canopy off.

Glamor is at present a very important stock in trade in the movie business; Margaret Thorpe devotes a whole chapter to glamor, which she defines as "it" or "oomph", plus luxury, plus elegance, plus romance. Theda Bara, the vamp, was the first star to get a first class glamor build-up. That lady was born Theodosia Goodman, which she shortened; her press agents announced to a believing world that she was the daughter of a French artist and his Arabian wife. That "Bara" was Arab spelt backward, and Theda a rearrangement of the letters of death. She received reporters in darkened rooms, with the walls hung in black and scarlet, and the air heavy with incense. The reporters had never seen anything like it before; they and the world were tremendously impressed. Glamor today is a different thing; press agents are more truthful, and emphasize beauty, and wealth and elegance. The place to study it in full flower, is of course, in the fan magazines; in those publications, says Margaret Thorpe, "Everything is superlative, surprising, exciting; everybody is always having a wonderful time, or else

recounting with great gusto the details of a desperate early struggle which led swiftly to the giddy heights of glamor. Nothing ever stands still, nothing ever rests.

"America at the movies" by Margaret Thorpe concerns only the motion picture of today; it is not interested in the history of pictures. Fortunately, though, another recent volume does concern itself with the history of the pictures: it is "The rise of the American film" by Lewis Jacobs. He begins his critical history of the film with the year 1896 when motion pictures were first shown at Koster & Bial's Music Hall in New York. From 1896 to the immediate present, Mr. Jacobs treats his material chronologically, and within each decade creates three broad subdivisions--the artistic development, business expansion, and the social purpose or effect which individual films or groups of films have had. His material was enormous in quantity and exceedingly difficult to handle; he has made out of it a lengthy, detailed book. Other cinema authorities have found minor points of disagreement with Jacobs, but on the whole they concede that his "Rise of the American film" is a creditable and important book; if you have a real interest in the American motion picture, you must certainly become acquainted with this book.

Mr. Jacobs examined hundreds of old motion pictures, before writing his book. Incidentally, the Film Library of the Museum of Modern Art in New York has collected prints of many old and rare pictures, thus aiding immeasurably the work of the research studio in film history. Jacobs has carefully studied the careers of the directors, who have undoubtedly had the most influence on the form of the movies. He points out the significant contributions

Of such old-time directors as Edwin Porter, Thomas Ince, Cecil B. DeMille and D. W. Griffith.

"To review (The Rise of the American Film) thoroughly would almost be to (talk for many hours), so wide is its compass and so innumerable its implication. A history of the American film is in many ways a history of America during the last forty years. And one critic concludes: "It is as important a book about its subject as anyone has written, or is like to write. Other gleaners in the field may pick up things he did not find, and others may reach more final judgments, but he has been a pioneer of invaluable quality."

One of the directors of early days who is still going strong is Samuel Goldwyn, whose life story has been briefly written by Alva Johnston under the title "The Great Goldwyn." "The election of Woodrow Wilson changed Goldwyn from a glove salesman to a movie magnate. The Wilson administration lowered the tariff on skins. Sam thought that would take the profit out of glvoes, (and) he looked around for some other line and picked the movies. That was in 1913. Goldwyn was only thirty, but he had a sales enthusiasm bordering on frenzy. He argues a man into a coma or into a disorder resembling the "bends." His victim signs anything.

Alva Johnston says that Samuel Goldwyn talked a large part of Hollywood into existence. The great Paramount studio is a monument to his nuisance value. The Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio is largely the petrified conversation of Goldwyn. He is out of both of those giant organizations now--out because the ruling principle of his life is--Goldwyn is boss. He quickly gets out of anything that he can't boss. At the age of twelve, he got out of his family. He now has his own company, "in which he is as

absolute as Ivan the Terrible"--Samuel Goldwyn, Inc., and Ltd.

His greatest fame, however, is based on his sayings and jokes. He came to this country alone as a Polish immigrant when he was only thirteen, and he has had exactly one year of night school instruction in English. So, although, his words built much of Hollywood, he mispronounces them and uses them in the wrong places. He is unrivalled today, Alva Johnston thinks, as an unconscious humorist or wit, through no fault of his own. At times his press agents have collected and even invented his gags; to detect the real ones from the false requires some expert detection. Johnston says "more people are counterfeiting on Goldwyn than on Uncle Sam." Here are some of his lines that good authorities will vouch for:

We can get all the Indians we need at the reservoir.

Excuse me, I am going out for some tea and trumpets.

I have been laid up with intentional flue.

That's the way with these directors, they're always biting the hand that lays the golden egg.

I want to make a picture about the Russian secret police--the G.O.P.

A verbal contract isn't worth the paper it's written on.

The true Goldwyn line is seldom a boner. It is usually a plain statement, with a slight twist; as, for example, his exclamation at the beach one lovely spring morning: "What a wonderful day to spend Sunday."

Goldwyn has discovered many people, and failed to discover others. He is responsible for the film fame achieved by Will Rogers, Vilma Banky and Robert Montgomery. He failed, however, to appreciate the capabilities of Gary Cooper, released him to another company that paid $2000 a week, and recently borrowed him

back again at $3000 a week. His greatest failure was Anna Sten whom he brought here from Poland. He would not listen to adverse judgments of her. She had, in his opinion, the enigmatic countenance of the Sphinx, and went around telling everyone, "She has the face of a Spink." He first thought Anna Sten was an actress, a dancer, a singer; after three failures he had to conclude she was none of the three. After hearing her sing, a vocal expert reported, "(Miss Sten) has a small but highly disagreeable voice."

This very short biography of Samuel Goldwyn is not important in any way, it may be highly prejudiced in favor of its subject, and yet it is an amusing book to glance through.

My last book in this group about the motion pictures is "The movies come from America" by Gilbert Seldes, who has been writing about that subject for a good many years now. His book is a more personal, rambling, account than the others, mingling history, criticism, and prejudice all together.

I began this talk with an estimate of the number of people who see an American film weekly--here is another figure even more exciting--Seldes estimates that in eight weeks "the motion picture audiences of the world equal in number the total population of the globe. People today spend more time going to the movies than they do on anything else after their basic human needs and appetites have been satisfied.

In discussing the coming of the talking pictures, Seldes says they destroyed the art of pantomime, which could be taken philosophically if any proper system of acting or playing had been developed in its place. Actually pantomime as a great art is practiced by a very small number of players. Chaplin and W. C.

Fields are in the first line, of course, and Emil Jannings in his better pictures; Alla Nazimova and Garbo, but not always. Mr. Seldes has some pertinent and interesting comments to make on the technique of screen acting and use of dialogue.

When he comes to color photography, Seldes has this to say: "The directors who have already used color have almost all made the error which was made in the beginning of sound. They have used it for its own sake, sacrificing it to action, rhythm and character." "You can imagine," Seldes continues, "the difficulties of a quick cut from the interior of an office, to a field of daisies, to a city slum, and to the interior of a silk mill. They were easy enough in the silent days, more difficult with the talkies, but with color added they will have to be handled with the greatest tact, so that the spectator does not merely see a wash or blur of color.

Gilbert Seldes has produced an informal book. If you were to plan to read it straight through, you might well be irritated by its lack of organization and proper editing. But, as a volume for the movie minded citizen to read casually and irregularly, I suggest "the movies come from America" by Gilbert Seldes.

The other books which I have mentioned this afternoon are:

America at the movies, by Margaret Thorpe

The Rise of the American film, by Lewis Jacobs

The great Goldwyn, by Alva Johnston.

The Library Book Parade
WHEC

5:00 P.M.

Jan 10

Drums:

Announcer: Here comes the Library Book Parade.

Provins:

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This is LeRoy Provins leading the Library Book Parade, a weekly program about books and authors sponsored by the Rochester Public Library.

If the English Cathedral known as Westminster Abbey had a different name, then the name of the author in whom I am interested today would perhaps be different from what it is. That sounds a bit complicated, so let me explain.

Shortly before the conclusion of the World War, a young Englishwoman decided to write a book, and was lucky enough to find a publisher. However, she was none to sure of the reception the book would receive, and decided to hide her identity under a pen-name. If your first book is an utter failure, as it is most apt to be, the polite, pitying sympathies of friends and relatives are not easy to bear. When you write under a pen-name, you don't need to wear your heart on your sleeve. So, this young lady took a pen-name and derived it from her second favorite church: St. Clement Dane's, becoming Miss Clemence Dane. Her favorite church which she would liked to have used, is Westminster Abbey, but she could scarcely go around as Miss Westminster, and Miss Abbey has an obviously old-fashioned sound. And Miss Clemence Dane has never had any intentions of being old-fashioned. The first novel was successful and the author had no cause to be ashamed of it, but she liked her new name and decided to retain it,

nevertheless. The only trouble with it, now she says, is that people occasionally in their ignorance corrupt it to Clarence Dane.

Merely for the record, I say now that her real name is Winifred Ashton, but people so seldom use it that I shall now promptly forget it. And, furthermore for the record, the reason I am talking about Clemence Dane today is her recently published novel, "The arrogant history of White Ben," about which more later.

Clemence Dane was born and brought up in rural England; today, she has a country home in Devonshire, where her lovely flower garden absorbs her time and interests so much that she seldom travels far away. I don't know her birth date, but if I may be so audacious and ungallant to judge her age from her photographs, I should say that Clemence Dane is somewhere in her comfortable fifties.

But to return now to her youth. When she was sixteen, she left school in England, went to Geneva, Switzerland and found a position teaching French. Soon she became interested in painting and abandoned teaching to study art; she became a successful portrait painter and there were many prophecies of even greater success for her in art. But Clemence Dane was apparently of a roving, inquisitive nature; she wanted to try her hand and her head at many things. So next, she became an actress on the London stage, playing under the name of Diana Portis. For five years she was a popular actress, and might well have continued on the stage to the present, had not ill health and the pressure of her work in the World War forced her off. She had long thought

of writing fiction, and this was her chance; in 1917 appeared her first novel, which began the long series of distinguished fiction and drama we have since had from her pen.

That is an outline of the career of Clemence Dane and I think it adds up to an impressive total. She has tried her hand at many professions and been successful in all of them: teacher, portrait painter, actress, novelist, and dramatist.

Of course, it is as a playwright and a novelist that Clemence Dane had made her true reputation; whatever measure of permanent fame she achieves will come to her from the books she has written. They are in many ways remarkable books; they are curiously blended of the real and the fantastic, the imaginative. Clemence Dane's characters are frequently in the position of either believing in the unbelievable and inexplicable, or doubting their own sanity, and, so real is their dilemma, that you, the reader, share it with them. She is an accomplished mistress of words; the poetry in her play "Will Shakespeare" is of the highest order of dramatic verse for the stage. As one critic says, "Clemence Dane's special distinction as a writer is to have won distinction in many different literary fields, and to have been mediocre in none. Even when she amused herself collaborating in the 'Sir John' detective yarns a bull's eye was invariably scored.... Her versatility has been displayed in such widely varying literary exploits as criticism, plays, fiction, including the large-scale family saga, and novels of more or less ordinary length but quite unordinary quality."

In 1919 Miss Dane published a novel called "Legend" in which a group of friends hear the news of the illness and later

the death of the most brilliant of their number. "They discuss her genius, temperament, and personality and give a real picture of the woman who never appears at all in the story." People insisted that "Legend" would make a good play, Miss Dane agreed, and the result was "A bill of divorcement," which was an immediate success in London. It is best remembered here because in it Katherine Cornell made her first big success--although produced in 1921, the time of the play was projected into the future, into 1932, and Miss Cornell was required to impersonate a modern young lady of ten years hence. The play was popular in New York, but for a curious reason. Most of the first night critics did not like it, and wrote adverse criticisms; Carl Van Vechten was in the audience, however, and he did like it. The next day he telephoned Alexander Woollcott, who had not been at the first night and convinced him he should hurry to see it. Woollcott liked it too, wrote about it and alone made "A bill of divorcement" a success. "Its story is that of Hilary Fairfield, an unbalanced young soldier driven mad by shellfire. Fifteen years later, the mists lift from his mind and he comes back home, a gray, scarred, twitching, abject fellow. He is confronted there with the fact that his wife had divorced him and is on the eve of a happy remarriage, that his daughter, who has never seen him and who has hitherto known nothing of her legacy of insanity, is blissfully engaged to the youngster of her choice. What happens thereafter is written with a skillful, sympathetic unflinching hand."

Clemence Dane's ambitious chronicle of four generations of a family called "The Babyons" still has a reading public; the

library has it in an attractive edition of four slim volumes, each volume a more or less complete story of one generation of the Babyon family. It is a mellow and richly colored tale made from tested ingredients--lords and ladies, gypsies and ghosts, moonlight trysts, madness, stolen marriages, and recurrent violent deaths.

The story begins in the early Georgian days and ends in the reign of the late Kind Edward. The Babyons are great, wealthy romantic people, but through their family runs a strain of madness, and on that Miss Dane hangs her tale. I would only confuse myself, and you, were I to attempt a summary of the plot; the characters and their relationships are too numerous and complex. Although some parts of "The Babyons" are better written and more compelling than other parts, the long novel as a whole is a commendable achievement and good reading. The Babyon men and women, who people it, are like the characters on a stage, tragic, exciting, compelling, but never quite real; they act their lives in a box according to a prescribed plan.

Clemence Dane did a second long, family history, "Broome stages," a novel which spans about 200 years and seven generations of a family. I think practically every critic who reviewed it said it was one of the outstanding novels of its period, deserved to be read by many people, and some even said, deserved to be re-read. The Broome family was the greatest theatrical family England ever produced. It was founded by the first Richard Broome who literally fell into the middle of a performance of "Midsummer night's dream" from a hay-loft where he had hidden. And this same Richard had a secret which founded the family

fortunes--an old witch named Lucy Godfrey was his friend, and from her he learned the secret of success on stage, the way "to beckon and reckon"--the secret of winning audiences. It traveled down through the Broome family, making their men and women the greatest actors and actresses of their times.

Miss Dane's novel has a host of portraits, and yet so individual is each one that the reader is never confused. In reading "Broome stages," it is not necessary to refer back to a genealogical tree to recall who Maud or William or Robert or Lettice was. You remember because of the drama, the tragedy, the humor, the triumphs you have shared with those characters.

Aside from the good story and vital character of "Broome stages," it also provides a history of the English theatre from the middle of the eighteenth century to the present. The history is not completely factual, of course; this is a novel and there never was a Broome family, but in spirit and in the sweep of her story Clemence Dane follows the true course of the theatre. The early Broomes acted the great roles of the English stage; the last Broome is in the motion pictures, his traditional family charm now "blatant, mechanized, reconstructed."

"Broome stages" is a long book, but not a tedious one to read. It's forward movement is unflagging, carrying the reader irresistably along through the fortunes and misfortunes of the Broome family.

Miss Dane has written so much that is worth mentioning and my time is growing short. I must hurry on. She has one volume of short stories, written by her perhaps for relaxation but for us another exhibition of her versatility and artistry.

The book is "Fate cries out," and contains the stories of nine people, each of whom we meet at the moment in which his fate cries out to him. Miss Dane says that writing stories out of the whole cloth of imagination grows very burdensome; and in "Fate cries out" she has taken her characters from history and legend, from the Bible and Grimm's Fairy Tales--that, she thinks, is an easier way to write, but only a great novelist could detect the good stories that she has detected.

"The valiant little tailor" is the first story in the book, a sadly ironic tale of a mousy little man who yearns for respectability, and who makes mourning clothes for his numerous family to attend his own hanging. There are stories of queens of England, of two women from the Bible, and of an opera star who finds herself in a peculiar hell. "Fate cries out" is not one of Miss Dane's major accomplishments, but it is uncommonly interesting reading.

I want to pay my respects at least briefly to another play by Clemence Dane, a play called "Will Shakespeare." It failed almost completely on the stage, perhaps because the conception of Shakespeare she presented was so completely at variance with the conceptions of most other people. The late Heywood Broun, in reviewing the play, wrote: "It seems to have been Miss Dane's intent to show that Shakespeare was little more than an instrument in the hands of people greater than himself--all women. According to the play, he was no more than a portable typewriter passed on from hand to hand. Here surely is the feminist interpretation of Shakespeare."

Katharine Cornell played Mary Fitton in that play. She says

in her autobiography, "It's hard to understand why "Will Shakespeare" didn't go better. It was beautiful stuff."

I must neglect now whatever else Clemence Dane has written to tell you about her latest book, "The arrogant history of White Ben." The scene, again, is England, and the time is shortly after 1950. What so many people are afraid today may actually happen, has at the opening of this book taken place. The world has been at war for too many years, and the world is broken and weary. Too many men have died, too many cities destroyed, too much of civilization lost.

Living quietly in rural England are a mother and her little girl; the mother is querulous and distant as she thinks of the havoc of the war, but the girl plays happily enough about the cottage, filling each day with trivialities. The crows are very bad that year, almost ruining the garden, the little girl and the hired man decide to reclothe the old scare-crow, hoping to frighten off the crows. They put on him all white clothes--white flannels, the surplice of a priest, and the jacket of a doctor--clothes that once belonged to men of the family who are now dead, And in his breast, the girl idly stuffs the root of the magic mandrake plant. In magical ways, the scare-crow breathes in life, wrenches himself loose from his sockets in the earth, and hobbles off down the road. He calls himself White Ben; he has one great, single hatred--crows, and how that he's loose, he has only one purpose, to destroy all the crows in England.

It happens that on this night the war ends, and every man, particulary the rich and powerful man, is afraid of what will happen to the country and the government; there is revolution in

the air. And as White Ben moves over the country, his eyes burning with a single zeal and purpose, people follow him, he becomes a leader. Powerful interests back him for their own ends, and White Ben, the scare-crow that came alive, becomes the dictator of England. When he preaches against crows, people believe he is speaking in allegories, believe he means his enemies--the rich or the powerful or the alien or people who simply disagree with him.

By using White Ben as her dictator, Clemence Dane can reduce to obvious absurdity the things that she hates and fears. White Ben has no ideas of his own, he must always copy other people. He has no program except to kill crows, and that is completely misunderstood. He is a pitiful, fearsome, synthetic, impossible creature.

I do not submit that "The arrogant history of White Ben" is a novel of any permanent importance. It is not. It is, however, a cleverly contrived and frequently illuminating story of strange events in a post-war world. It's parallels with events of the present years are unmistakable, its implications in the thinking of today are interesting.

All the books I have mentioned today are by Clemence Dane. Thank you and good day until next week.

The Library Book Parade
WHEC
February 7, 1940
5:00 P. M.

Drums

Announcer: Here comes the Library Book Parade.

Provins:

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. This is LeRoy Provins leading the Library Book Parade, a weekly program about books and authors prepared and presented by the Rochester Public Library.

Roses are red
Violets are blue
Sugar is sweet
And so are you.

That time-honored jingle, ladies and gentlemen, will come back into its own a week from today when we celebrate St. Valentine's day. Ordinarily that day might come and go without my being particularly aware of it; I am not an overly romantic person. However, a chance stop in the Local History Division of the Main Library Monday afternoon started me to thinking about Valentines. Miss Emma Swift, who has charge of the Local History room, showed me a collection of old valentines that have been presented to the Library, valentines mostly from the nineteenth century. The Local History Division, you know, gathers together and organizes for use all kinds of printed and written material about Rochester and its vicinity. While the valentines I saw are not strictly Rochester material, yet they were received and collected by Rochesterians.

Among these old valentines, some were crude and gaudy, others delicate and lovely. I became interested in the history of the subject, have done some reading on it, and this broadcast is the result.

The origin of Valentine's Day is obscure. There have been at least five Saints Valentine, and some people maintain there have been seven. The perplexing problem immediately is that none of these saints had a remote connection with love or friendship. Why their name should have been given to the one day in the year devoted to an unblushing avowal of love is something of a mystery. Of the saints, two were the most important; one was a priest of Rome who died the violent death of a martyr in the third century; the other simply choked to death on a fish-bone.

The day named by the church to honor these saints is the fourteenth of February. And here is the best explanation of why their day became a day of love and friendship. In ancient, pagan Rome there was a ceremony in honor of Pan and Juno held during the month of February. During this ceremony, boys and girls would draw names from an urn; the person whose name each boy or girl drew was supposed to receive especial attention during the rest of the year. Now when the Christian church came into dominance, it tried to eradicate the pagan festivals, or if that seemed impossible to modify those old festivals by combining them with some Christian observance. Since the Roman ceremony in honor of Pan and Juno fell about the middle of February, and so did the day in honor of the Saints Valentine, the two became one.

At first the Church pastors attempted a second modification. They retained the drawing or the lottery, but in place of boys' and girls' names they used the names of the Saints. The Saint whom you drew in this annual lottery was your particular protector for the ensuing year. It never quite worked, however. The great

numbers of the common people liked their old custom of drawing the names of personal friends. As late as the sixteenth century, however, the church tried to stop the practice. Love, I might say with moderation, was triumphant. And so, with many changes and modifications, the fourteenth of February is still the day for indicating your choice of friends and lovers.

The early English poets frequently wrote about Valentine's day---Chaucer, Lydgate, Shakespeare, and Drayton. Shakespeare has Ophelia sing these four lines:

Good morrow, 'tis St. Valentine's day
All in the morn betime,
And I a maid at your window
To be your Valentine.

Drayton, a poet contemporary with Shakespeare, begins a charming poem to his valentine in this way:

Muse, bid the morn awake,
Sad winter now declines,
Each bird doth choose a mate,
This day's St. Valentine's;
For that good bishop's sake
Get up and let us see,
What beauty it shall be
That fortune us assigns.

There seems to have been three practices connected with St. Valentine's day, and all of them current at about the same time in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. First the simplest and probably the most serious---the practice of concentrating on the individual that you love; deliberate choice with no chance or lottery in it. The second way to get a Valentine for yourself back in those old days was certainly easy; a woman could challenge the first unmarried man she saw on February 14 to be her Valentine; and a man had the same privilege of challenging the first woman he met.

In an old play, a rural dame has these lines to say:

> Last Valentine, the day when birds of kind
> Their paramous with mutual chirpings find,
> I early rose just at the break of day,
> Before the sun had chased the stars away:
> A-field I went, amid the morning dew,
> To milk my kine (for so should housewives do)
> Thee first I spied--and the first swain I see,
> In spite of Fortune shall my true love be.

I read about another lady who had workmen repairing her house on Valentine's day, and had to keep her eyes covered lest she see one of them and be forced to take him for her Valentine. Some people didn't play quite fair in this game; they didn't leave the choice entirely up to chance. Suppose Miss Brown had secretly been in love with young Mr. Jones for many months, then Miss Brown could plot to be some place on the street early in the morning and bump, quite by accident, into Mr. Jones. If she claimed he was the first man she had seen, then he was her Valentine.

The method of choosing Valentines by drawing names out of a box or a bowl must have presented difficulties, too. At one time, both the men and the women drew names, so that each person at a party had two Valentines. The girl whom a man drew, and the girl who drew him, both would be his Valentine. Custom, though, allowed him to pay more attention to the girl whom he, himself, drew. That may have eased the situation somewhat, but I can easily imagine the fights and heartaches that often accompanied a drawing.

It was customary to give your Valentine a gift. It was also thought very fine, indeed, if two single people who met through a St. Valentine's party drawing, should fall in love and marry.

At other times, people who were already married participated in the drawings and in the "I meet you first" games; then, of course, it was merely a matter of a gift and of friendship.

One of the great sources of information about old St. Valentine's Day customs, as it is a source about so many other subjects, is Samuel Pepys' Diary. Pepys, as you probably already know, kept a diary from 1660 to 1669; he kept it in short-hand, and like most diaries, it was intended only for his personal reading. It is therefore spontaneous, frank, and revealing. Nothing was too trivial and nothing was too important for Samuel Pepys to record and to comment on. When the diary was deciphered around 1820, the world was delighted to learn that Pepys had left us the best contemporary account we have of England in the 1660's. Pepys was quite an important man in the government of England, and lived the life of parties, and the theatre, and heavy drinking and eating that we associate with the Restoration life of London. His diary has a unique fascination because it is so completely intimate and unstudied, There are also many excellent lives of him in the library's biography collection.

But to get back to Pepys and Valentines, in almost every entry for February 14, he has some revealing comment to make.

Here is the one for 1660: "My wife, hearing Mr. Moore's voice in my dressing-chamber, got herself ready, and came down and challenged him for her Valentine."

The entry for another year is this: "Up early, and to Sir W. Batten's, but could not go in till I found out whether they that opened the door was a man or a woman, and Mingo, who was there, answered a woman, which, with his tone, made me laugh; so up I

went, and took Mrs. Martha for my Valentine (which I do only for complacency), and Sir W. Batten, he go in the same manner to my wife, and so we were very merry."

In 1667 he has this entry, which indicates that people were already beginning to make Valentine's Day cards: "This morning came up to my wife's bedside (I being up dressing myself) little Will Mercer to be her Valentine, and brought her name written upon blue paper in gold letters, done by himself, very pretty; and we were both well pleased with it. But I am also this year my wife's Valentine, and it will cost me five pounds, but that I must have laid out if we had not been Valentines." Two days later, on the sixteenth, Pepys writes this: "I find that Mrs. Pierce's little girl is my Valentine, she having drawn me, which I was not sorry for, it easing me of something more than I must have given to others. But here I do first observe the fashion of drawing mottoes as well as names, so that Pierce, who drew my wife, did draw also a motto and this girl drew another for me. What mine was, I forget; but my wife's was "Most courteous and most fair."

From about this time on to about 1800, and often much later, if you wanted to send a Valentine card to your favorite boy or girl, then you had to make it yourself. These homemade Valentines are the ones that collectors prize most highly today. In the earliest days of making them, you might have had only a sheet of gilt edged paper, but later on you could buy paper with frilly, lacey borders. Then you had little gummed stickers to paste on the sheet---maybe a cupid with his bow and arrow, or if you wanted to be more positive, the picture of a loving couple seated under

a bower of flowers with a church in the distance.

Your message had to be in verse; prose was too common and vulgar for St. Valentine's day. The hundreds of samples of this home-made verse which have survived in collections of Valentines must represent thousand of hours of toil. But not everybody, no matter how hard he might try, could force his wits to produce a proper poem. So, the publishers of books, came to his rescue. Books, with such titles as these began to appear in the eighteenth century: "The young man's Valentine writer;" or "Hymen's rhapsodies," with this sub-title, "Lovers' themes, a collection of original Valentine verses for gentlemen to address ladies in sonnets, superior to any others."

These books offered a wide choice of selection: there were poems accepting the offered love in the most fervent phrases, there were other poems rejecting the love in no uncertain way. Suppose a young girl's swain was a brick layer; on St. Valentine's day she receives his Valentine with this poem on it, a poem he has labored over for days:

To My Valentine

With mortar and trowel
You know I do no ill,
  But a mansion can raise very high;
Then, sweet Valentine,
If you will be mine,
  You shall have a fine house by and by.

Well, the girl wants to accept, she has to respond in verse, but she can never hope to compose it herself. So, out she runs to buy a book of Valentine verses, finds a poem for a bricklayer and sends him this answer:

Dearest Valentine

My charmer, my sweet,
I will kneel at your feet,
  And to your fond wishes incline;
Your mansion so great,
  So charming and neat,
  Will please your own Valentine.

The ingenuity of printers and stationers in selling thousands of ready-made Valentines and the always cheaper postage rates eventually changed the picture completely. Many of the Valentines that could be bought were at first elaborate and quite beautiful, but they gradually became cheaper, more gaudy, and less fine. By 1880 and 1890, the Valentine had degenerated into a comic or derogatory cartoon, usually sent anonymously to annoy rather than please the receiver. I won't go on from there, because you know as well as I know that the Valentine has again returned to popularity.

The Library Book Parade
WHEC
February 14, 1940
5:00 P.M.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This is LeRoy Provins leading the Library Book Parade, a weekly program about books and authors sponsored by the Rochester Public Library.

On the twenty-second of this month Maurice Evans will present in Rochester his full-length version of Shakespeare's play, "Hamlet." Mr. Evans' theatrical success with the plays of Shakespeare in the last few years is but one typical example of the general success that actors and actresses have recently had with the dramas of the old English playwright. Despite the fact that he died in 1616, Shakespeare can stand up today and honestly claim to earn as much money and to win as much twentieth-century praise as any living dramatists. Our renewed interest in and appreciation of Shakespearian performances are interesting and somewhat astonishing.

To keep pace with this enthusiasm for Shakespeare in the theatre, we have had a considerable number of new books on the man and his plays. I have picked out three of the more interesting and readable of these books, and this afternoon I intend to tell you briefly about them. Such a fantastic amount of writing on Shakespeare has been done through the centuries that I am always amazed when some author finds a legitimate reason for a new book about him. However, W. H. Auden, the poet, writes that "If it is true that life provides everyone with the material for one good book, it is also true that everyone has something worth while to say about plays of Shakespeare." My personal objection to so much of the Shakespearean literature is its stuffy air of pedantry

and blind, unadulterated scholarship. The books which I have on my list today, however, are books for the general reader; they are reliable, authentic books on Shakespeare written by scholars for people like you and me to read.

Perhaps the most important book of the whole lot is one entitled simply "Shakespeare," recently written by Professor Mark Van Doren. "Scholars and common people who think they have no more room on their shelves for a new book on Shakespeare will change their minds after the first five pages of Mr. Van Doren's volume. These pages are his general introduction to the plays and they are a miracle of good sense and brevity. From that point, each play is taken up separately by the author, demonstrating by illustration and illumination the peculiar power of each play for him."

"Another critic of Shakespeare, the famous Dr. Johnson was the first to be brief and sensible and memorable in his sentences on Shakespeare's poetry. He is the only critic quoted in this new book and the distinction is right. I don't believe Johnson would be displeased to have Van Doren's new book alongside his old one. For any one who has read Shakespeare or is about to read Shakespeare, this book (of VanDoren's) is by far the best modern commentary; and besides, it is, even without Shakespeare, a delightful book in itself."

For Van Doren the play's the thing, and not so much the play as performed in the theatre as the play read and pondered upon in the quiet of the library. He ignores all the conventional and rather tiresome problems of Shakespeare; the problems of biography, theatrical history and conventions, questions of text

and the like. He draws no analogies between the plays of Shakespeare and those of his contemporaries. Not more than once or twice does he glance, and then only for a moment, at questions of authorship. "Shakespeare" by Mark Van Doren is one poet's sensitive appreciation of the great works of another poet.

Another recent addition to the literature of Shakespeare is called "Shakespeare in America" by Esther Dunn. In this book the author has packed an incredible amount of information on Shakespeare in every conceivable relation to the cultural history of the United States. Practically all critics have received "Shakespeare in America" with warm praise; one of them wrote that it "Would be hard to pick out a better recent example of genuinely scholarly investigation prepared for a popular audience."

Esther Dunn says that some magic in Shakespeare's "pages, either truly felt or taken for granted, has made (him) along with the Bible, a constant companion of American development. For the first hundred and fifty years he was a symbol of our English 'home'. ...The middle-class refugess from England turned their backs on him as a part of all they disliked. But they turned their backs in full consciousness that he stood there behind them, inalienably a part of their English inheritance. The colonists, who kept close to England and followed its cultural dictates, found Shakespeare, both in the library and on the stage, a bond with life at home. He had appropriate lines for their diaries and letters. He comforted their new patriotism and enforced their determination to stand against British tyranny. Until after the American Revolution, Shakespeare in America was a provincial echo of Shakespeare in England.

"Then, in the new American nation the new social values began slowly to work on Shakespeare. He was still the symbol of culture. To own a volume of Shakespeare, to see him in the theatre, was an obligation. The way in which his plays permeated American life in the nineteenth century is revealing. We were insecure culturally. We had to protest that our culture was of the first water.

"School boys and girls, political orators, preachers, neighborhood clubs, made him their own. He echoed along the banks of the Ohio and Mississippi as the flatboats bore settlers and entertainers westward to the new frontier. He was familiar in mining camps. His effigy on the fronts of buildings in Pittsburgh and Chicago looked down to assure the populace that culture was rampant in their new world. The best minds were equally occupied with him. To the writings of Emerson and Whitman, he is a constant background. Lincoln tided himself over difficult moments with quotations from Shakespeare."

In her search for the beginnings of Shakespeare in America, Miss Dunn is not surprised to find him missing from the earliest libraries. That age, she says, the first half of the seventeenth century, was peculiarly like our present time, in that people wanted to read serious books. They had no interest in stage-plays written by a man who had been dead only a few years. Shakespeare had not yet begun to achieve his almost universal and unanimous acclaim. William Brewster was the only university graduate in the Plymouth Colony, and when he died in 1643 he left a fine library, but it didn't contain any Shakespeare. John Harvard, a young Puritan minister, died in 1638, and left behind him four

hundred books, but no Shakespeare. John Harvard, by the way, willed his books and one-half of his estate to the new college for which the General Court of Massachusetts had already voted four hundred pounds. The authorities decided to name the school "Harvard" after the man who was so generous with his books; that has always seemed to me one of the luckiest gifts a man ever made. Other men have given away many millions of dollars in return for much less fame. After searching all of the seventeenth century for traces of Shakespeare, the author concludes they are very scarce. He was present, though, and as staunchly as we could reasonably expect. Amusingly enough, one of the few men of that time who are suspected of having owned a Shakespeare folio is Cotton Mather, the stern, uncomprising moralist.

Although Miss Dunn doesn't mention Rochester in her book, I have some information about Shakespeare and the theatre in our city. According to one man who investigated the subject, "Rochester was one of the last inland cities to yield a foothold to the player and the showman." Two reasons are given: the people were too busy building the city to pay much attention to any kind of amusement, and there was too much New England background to permit any real tolerance of the theatre. Occasionally in the early days of the nineteenth century, there would be a play in Rochester, but if the newspapers paid any attention to it, it was to condemn. For example, here is a comment from a newspaper of 1828: "It is really astonishing to think that the trustees of so respectable a village as Rochester, should permit such a disorderly place as the theatre. We wxpress ourselves thus plainly from our knowledge that the respectable part of this community has long since decidedly

disapprobated the theatre, and we do sincerely hope that our village trustees will, hereafter, when an application for license is presented by any playing company, act more in accordance with the wishes of the sober, reflecting and moral part of our citizens." As late as 1838, Henry O'Reilly in his "Sketches of Rochester" gives devout thanks that "neither theatre nor circus can now be found in Rochester."

In 1826 two new theatres opened in Rochester. For its first bill one of them advertised performances of Shakespeare's "Richard III," and another play called "The Rendezvous." This was the first performance of "Richard III" and probably one of the very first Shakespearian plays given here. The great Edwin Booth appeared frequently in Rochester in Shakespearian plays from 1860 to 1889. His theatre in Rochester was the old Metropolitan Theatre, although he made his last Rochester performance in the Lyceum, which was then new. The Rochester Shakespeare Society was founded in 1865, and is said to be the second oldest one in the country.

In "Shakespeare in America," Esther Dunn continues her comments on such subjects as the quality of colonial Shakespearian performances, Shakespeare and the magazines of America, Shakespeare in the California Gold Rush, and Shakespeare in the schools and colleges. The whole book is a revealing and frequently amusing commentary on American cultural habits and changes.

My last book about Shakespeare is perhaps a minor contribution but is certainly an interesting one. It is called "The fourth forger" and was written by John Mair, spelled M-A-I-R. It is the story of William Ireland, who forged a play, a mortgage, and other

supposed Shakespeare items. In his day, which was around the end of the eighteenth century, he and his father became quite famous because of the astonishing Shakespearian documents they were finding. Actually, the young man was forging them all himself; some people have believed that the father was in on the deception, but the author of the "Fourth Forger" does not consider him guilty. The three famous forgers of literature who preceeded Ireland were Lauder, who accused Milton of plagiarism; Macpherson, who invented the Gaelic poet, Ossian; and Chatterton, the boy poet, who served up his poetry as the work of a medieval monk. In his book, Mr. Mair retells the story; how and why Ireland committed the forgeries, how suspicion grew, and the bubble of deceit pricked. The result is as fascinating as most detective stories.

William Ireland as a youngster had been brought up to worship Shakespeare and anything connected with him. William's father, who collected and sold all sorts of antiques and curios, was always looking for any kind of material that would bring new light on the subject of Shakespeare's obscure life, When the boy began to forge, he probably had two motives; first, to clear Shakespeare's name of any slurs cast upon it; to help along the memory of his idol. The second motive, was to prove to himself, his father and the world that he had wit enough to deceive them. One of the cruel things about his exposure, was that after he confessed the forgeries to his father, that irate man refused to believe his son had ever had sense enough to commit them.

This story of William Ireland and his spoofing of the whole world of scholarship is entertaining, especially as Mr. Mair presents it.

The Library Book Parade
WHEC
June 26, 1940
5:00 P.M.

Music

Announcer: Here comes the Library Book Parade.

Provins:

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. This is LeRoy Provins leading the Library Book Parade, a weekly program about books and authors prepared and presented by the Rochester Public Library.

I'm sure that you people who use the Public Library will understand the feeling I occasionally have--the feeling that there are so many books to choose from in the Library that the final selection is difficult. The Library has well over four hundred thousand volumes--and that number can be overpowering at times. The very wealth of books from which to choose makes it difficult every once in awhile to know what to talk about on this program. That's why, when someone gives me an idea or an author for this weekly Library Book Parade, I'm ready to remember that person in my prayers at night. Miss Bettina Hunter rates such a place today. Miss Hunter, who works in the Main Library's Literature and Biography Division, suggested the author of today's books.

The author is Frances Warner, a middle-aged woman who has written a rather long string of delightful, amiable books of essays. Perhaps I ought not to have said "essays," so bluntly, because that word may have made a lot of people turn off their radios, and that would be a pity. A pity, not because they wouldn't have the privelege of hearing me deliver this monologue, but a pity because they would thereby miss a better acquaintance with the books of Miss Warner. I assure you that the essays Miss

Warner writes are not the kind you save as serious reading to be done in your old age; quite the contrary--whatever seriousness she has in her books is hidden beneath abundant wit and good humor, charm and urbanity.

Very frankly, I did not know much about Frances Warner and her books until I began to read for this talk with you. I can honestly say that reading her books these last few days has been one of the most pleasant preparations I have ever made during all the fairly long time now that the Public Library has been on the air.

In married life, Frances Warner is Mrs. Mayo Dyer Hersey. During most of her life, she has been a teacher--first in high schools, and later in Wellesley and Mount Holyoke. Another of her jobs has been the assistant editorship of the Atlantic Monthly, a magazine in which many of her essays or articles originally appeared.

Most of her books are made up of short pieces on any subject or idea that appealed to her. An exception is her latest book, "Amateur's holiday," which she describes as "the story of a holiday with stringed instruments by the sea." To put it a little more plainly, the author tells in this book of a Christmas house party on the New Jersey coast that she and her husband attended. The guests had been carefully chosen; they all had one common interest--music, and most of them could play, so together they made up an orchestra. Going down to New Jersey for Christmas morning meant getting up very early for the author's family. She writes,

"Normally our idea of a good time does not include getting

up before dawn. Whenever I wind an alarm clock, I wind myself up too. Like a manufacturer who installs a robot in his plant and then stays around to supervise the robot, I am right on hand to choke our clock when it makes that threatening little swallow in its throat before it begins to chuckle and chime."

When Miss Warner, or Mrs. Hersey if you prefer her married name, arrived at the week-end house she found an electric organ had been installed as a present to the hostess from her son. Most all of these people were Philadelphians, and Miss Warner makes a comment about them that I want to pass on to you. Personally I like Philadelphia so much, that I always enjoy finding something nice about it in a book. Miss Warner writes:

"People in Philadelphia treat themselves to music as people in Newport treat themselves to yachts. A man in Philadephia gets an extra musical instrument for his household much as a man of Detroit might get his family an extra car."

"Amateur's holiday," is made up of four parts: music, good food, good company, and the interesting or penetrating anecdotes with which Miss Warner peppers all her books. For music, the guests formed an orchestra with these instruments: an organ, piano, first and second violins, a cello, a viola, and a flute. For good food, they had Philadelphia scrapple, fresh steamed lobsters, turkey, pies and cakes. The company offered diverse personalities; the guest of honor was a young girl from Colorado who had never seen the ocean, and they were all very careful that she had had a satisfying breakfast, before they dramatically pulled back the curtains from the windows that faced the sea, and let the Colorado girl take her first long look at the foaming waves

and the circling sea gulls. The fourth part of this book, "amateur's holiday," the anecdotes and stories, Miss Warner supplies in plenty. One of the guests was a Quaker, and she gave the company her Quaker grandmother's recipe for pie; the language is so charming that Miss Warner repeats it all: I have time to give you only a bit.

It starts like this: "Whatever amount of flour thee takes, thee must take one-third that quantity of shortening. Thee must keep the shortening ice cold, and the bowl ice cold, and the water ice cold, and thee must get thy hands as cold as thee can. Thee must then take one third of thy shortening that thee has measured out, mix it with flour, add a little of the ice water, but thee mustn't get it too wet--and whack it out on the board." The recipe ends with this bit of advice, "And if thy pie is a juicy one, thee had better cut a hole in the top crust with a funnel of paper stuck in, so that the steam can escape and not explode thy pie."

Miss Warner comments that "one of the most enchanting elements of speech in the Quaker manner is the admixture that one finds among the witty 'Friends' of scriptural parlance and modern slang. Perhaps I do not mean exactly slang, but the sudden surprise, for instance, of hearing somebody who uses the 'plain speech' interject such an up-to-date phrase as 'To tell thee the truth, I think thee had better step on it.'"

Miss Warner ends this charming book of hers, "Amateur's holiday," with this observation. "Whatever may happen to the startled bivouac of this world," she writes, "as long as half a dozen kindred spirits are left, they will come together and talk.

They will struggle back up the hills of civilization to this 'seventh heaven' that human beings always may possess--the magic gift of communing with one another through words, through music, and through love."

All that I have quoted so far in this program comes from the one book, "Amateur's holiday," but many other books that Frances Warner has written are just as interesting in their own ways.

One of her minor books, is a fifty page affair addressed "To the people we like." I'll say no more about it, but simply read you the beginning, which I enjoyed. It starts off like this: "The people we like! May their conversation never grow less. May their tires never flatten. May their boats never leak, their clocks never stop, their pipes never freeze, their fishing-lines never part cable. May their moving vans never turn turtle. May their hydroplanes never collide.

"May their dreams never dwindle, their loves never cease, their plastering never come down. May they be visited this day with a shred suspicion that we wish them well."

One of her volumes that are made up of odds and ends of short pieces is a book called "Pleasures and palaces." It contains an essay on "Hay fever!" "Three sneezes," Miss Warner says, "are lucky; nineteen unlucky. One sneeze, isolated, can be taken as proof that you have not the authentic, aristocratic, Henry Ward Beecher variety of hay fever.

"Hay fever arrives and combusts on the minute," warns the author. "Every sufferer tries to forget his particular date, only confiding to other sufferers what date he is trying to forget.

Nevertheless, his day, like the Fourth of July, is invariably announced in the early morning twilight by an explosion. If you forget Independence Day, or your rendezvous with the hay fever, the explosion occurs just the same... Contrary to popular notion," says Frances Warner, "the actual sneeze, per se, is not the most disagreeable part of hay fever. The intolerable phase is that curious sensation of things impending, which immediately precedes a sneeze. If this sensation is not brought to a victorious conclusion, it leaves its medium suspended in the air, thwarted irascible."

Another of Frances Warner's entertaining books is "The unintentional charm of men," a book in which the author has many flattering and encouraging things to say about us men. In reading this book, I was particularly happy to find one woman who appreciates the subtleties of men's clothes. Before she was married, Miss Warner says, she always envied men the simplicity of their dress. She writes, "no matter how elaborate the occasion, all they have to do is to step into a fine plain standardized costume, and there they are. But I was to learn," adds the author,"that their costume is no such casual matter of simply stepping in. The fine simplicity is the sum of all its particles, each one more vitally necessary than the last, and each scheduled for its place, like the stones of a cathedral, like the springs and jewels of a watch. The finished neat cylindrical effect looks simple in the same sense that an electron tube looks simple; it is amazingly put together, elaborately thought out--what the modern French modiste calls 'compose.'"

After going on to discuss the intricacies of men's clothing, Frances Warner ends up with this suggestion for young wives: "If they wish to win undying gratitude at some unexpected crisis," she writes, "let them keep hidden in reserve a secret collection of duplicates of all those precious particles without any one of which a gentleman's costume cannot stand. Their fathers can give them an accurate list of these. Indeed a choice equipment of such things might well be part of a father's dowry to a bride. Only reflect," Miss Warner asks, "upon the dramatic moment, when, the whole world collapsing for want of one little tiny hinge, the bride opens her jewel case and produces a duplicate of the lost particle which the rigidity of masculine tradition demands should be just so and not otherwise--no novelities, no substitutes, no compromise, no patchings-up."

Well, I could go on and talk for an hour about the books of Frances Warner, reading you bits here and there. They are easy books to talk about, just as they are easy books to read. But my time is up, and I'll simply say that if you want civilized, urbane and witty reading, don't forget the books of Frances Warner. The Main Library has them all, and the branches of the Rochester Public Library throughout the city have a good representation of them.

Before I go off the air, however, I want to read you a proclamation issued by Mayor Samuel B. Dicker. I think it explains itself.

WHEREAS, printing has contributed magnificently and essentially to man's realization of his own vast future; and

WHEREAS, the year 1940 has been universally accepted as the

year to observe the 500th anniversary of the European invention of printing from movable types; and

WHEREAS, Rochester is nationally prominent for its teaching of printing, the Board of Education having been a pioneer in the establishment of printing in the public school curriculum, and the Rochester Athenaeum and Mechanics Institute containing a prominent Department of Publishing and Printing; and

WHEREAS; Rochester has long been the home of excellent and outstanding craftmanship in printing; and

WHEREAS, The Rochester Public Library has chosen July 1, 1940 as the beginning of a series of public exhibits in commemoration of this anniversary; and

WHEREAS, the National Graphic Arts Education Guild meets in convention in this city beginning June 30, 1940 also to observe this anniversary;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Samuel B. Dicker, Mayor of the City of Rochester do proclaim the week of June 30, 1940 the official week for the observation in this city of the 500th anniversary of the invention of printing, and do hereby invite the people of Rochester to visit the exhibits of the Rochester Public Library, and otherwise to participate in appropriate commemorative celebration.

(Signed) Samual B. Dicker
Mayor of the City of Rochester

The Library Book Parade
WHEC
May 22, 1940
5:00 P. M.

Drums:

Announcer: Here comes the Library Book Parade.

Provins:

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This is LeRoy Provins bringing you the Library Book Parade, a weekly program about books and authors prepared and presented by the Rochester Public Library.

Twelve librarians, tried and true, are the ladies who directly control the fortunes of the branches of the Rochester Public Library. These twelve branches are scattered throughout the city--from the Charlotte Branch on Stutson Street down near the lake, to the Monroe Branch in its fine building way out Monroe Avenue. Scattered they are, but not without rhyme and reason; through the years, the branches have been located in or near the most thickly populated residential sections. The branches represent the most important means the Rochester Public Library has to bring books and book-services directly to you.

Getting back to the librarians themselves, however, the other day I was at a meeting where they all were present. In the conversation we had, we decided it would be worthwhile to devote this program this afternoon to two or three books that were in all the branches and that all the librarians could honestly endorse as entertaining, worthwhile reading. Not all the branches, you know, have the same books in their collection; each branch librarian makes an intelligent effort to choose for

her collection the books that best meet the needs and the tastes of the people in the locality her branch serves.

Well, out of the welter of suggestions of titles for today, I choose these three to talk about:

Osa Johnson's, I married adventure.

Katharine Brush's, This is on me.

and Harold Lamb's, March of the barbarians. These books are in all twelve of the branches, which in itself is a recommendation for them of the highest kind. I said I would review those three books, but as I look at the clock I expect I'll have to save one for another time, Harold Lamb's, March of the barbarians. That leaves me with two books--both recently published, both unusual, both by women, and both about their married and professional lives.

Katharine Brush you probably remember as the author of such best-sellers as "Young man of Manhattan" and "Red-headed woman," books that later were made into highly successful motion pictures. While no sane person would ever pin a medal of literary immortality on Mrs. Brush, yet there's no denying that she can write ususually well and easily. With a typewriter that can be equally bitter and tender, she has described our contemporary American life in seven novels and many short-stories.

Her newest book, "This is on me," is definitely not a novel. But that negative definition is about the closest I can come to a classification of it--it's part autobiography, part a collection of short-stories, and part a revelation of her literary career. But here's what Mrs. Brush herself writes about her book:

"It is only fair to warn you that this book is a vast hodge-

podge--the title fits as best it can, but that's not well. There is no real way of describing such a shambles of a book as this, and no way of explaining it, except to tell you how it came about. It came about, then, because publishers do not like very much to publish straight collections of short stories (which was what I wanted). It seems it's hard enough to sell whole novels, in this day and age.

"Now my publishers," continues Mrs. Brush, "as you won't see from the title page, are called John and Stanley. They are nice young men of different sizes and color schemes. I have loved them dearly for years, and they have loved me in their fashion. So we all three sat in one of their offices--well, no, as a matter of fact we didn't, now I come to think of it. We planned this book at a table at the Persian Room in the Plaza Hotel, at two o'clock in the morning, while Eddie Duchin's orchestra was playing "Get out of town." This fact alone ought to give you a rough idea." concludes Mrs. Brush.

What the three of them planned that morning was a book that would contain some typical Katharine Brush short-stories, and that the author would then tell how each story was written, how the idea came to her, and trouble she had, if any, and whether or not her editors liked it, and what the public's reaction was. In other words, the blow-by-blow account. Well, in some ways, Katherine Brush followed that idea in writing "This is on me," but, her own life persistently crept into the book, until "This is on me" became also a kind of autobiography. It has ended up exactly what Mrs. Brushhonestly says it is, "a vast hodge-podge." It is a hodge-podge, however, with considerable interest--authors who are

more aspiring than successful will find it fascinating, readers of Katharine Brush's books will relish the intimate picture of how she works and lives, and people like me, who occasionally want only a well-written, intelligent, and reasonably distinctive book, will be satisfied with this hodge-podge, called "This is on me."

Mrs. Brush was born in Middletown, Connecticut; her father was headmaster of Dummer Academy in Massachusetts. That unfortunate name for a boy's school--Dummer--plagued Mrs. Brush as a young girl; she always knew people would laugh at it, and she would have to explain it. What little education she had took place in a girl's boarding school, where she distinguished herself as the most mischievous, trouble-making, penalized girl on the campus. The real fun she got out of that school was writing about it in her diary, which she gives you samples of in this book. Mrs. Brush in her early 'teens could write remarkable well you learn from the diary.

Her inability to learn Latin was the indirect cause of her never going farther in school, and her first job. Her father, head-master that he was, soon discovered that his daughter didn't begin to know enough Latin to pass a college entrance examination, so he kept her home for a year to tutor her; it was that year she decided she might as well work, got a job on a Boston newspaper, first as a typist, and then as a substitute motion-picture columnist. She never did learn the Latin.

Eventually, she married Stew Brush, a likeable young man who took her off to East Liverpool, Ohio, where his father was the publisher of a newspaper. It is East Liverpool with all its small

town characteristics, that gave Mrs. Brush much of her material for her short-stories and novels.

For years now, she had been writing and writing, sending her stuff off to editors and publishers, and always getting it all back with printed rejection slips. Then she remembered the not quite nice magazines that had always been banned in her father's school, and in the one she attended, but magazines that never the less were widely read by the young. So, she began to write indiscreet short-stories for cheap magazines and, the rejection slips turned into acceptance letters and checks. That activity was all right as long as the stories were printed under a pseudonym, but one fateful day, when she happened to be back in Massachusetts visiting her family, she found a copy of a periodical called "Torrid Tales" that contained a story by her, and through an unfortunate error, also contained her real name, Katharine Brush. The horrible picture of all the little Dummer Academy boys buying the forbidden Torrid Tales, finding her story and her name were too much for Mrs. Brush. The scandal, she knew would also be too much for her father. There followed an hilarious chase in a car with a broad-minded faculty member, as the two of them bought up all the copies of Torrid Tales they could find, and sent them floating out to sea by way of the Parker River.

That taught Mrs. Brush her lesson, and she thereafter refrained from writing for magazines of the Torrid Tales kind of market. College Humor, in its hey dey of success, became Mrs. Brush's first real magazine market. She specialized in writing the fast, furious and glamorous college story--aping as carefully as she could

Scott Fitzgerald, who was then the top-notch writer in expressing the spirit of our prohibition children.

Her first novel to bring her wide-spread attention was "Young man of Manhattan." She writes about it in these words: "Now it's an adventure to have a best-seller, and especially a first one; and "Young man of Manhattan" was even quite a big one, in its season and year. This sort of thing makes you feel famous over night (your error, as you later find) and you are treated like the Fair-Haired Girl (for the duration--not a minute longer.)

In a light-hearted but seldom trite spirit, Mrs. Brush continues the story of her private and literary lives, mingling the two with careless grace. She divorced her first husband, and married another; she wrote more successful books, she came to the sad point in her career where she couldn't write another word, she lived a life of luxury and travel. It's all set down in the book, never in too much detail, always amusingly and good naturedly. No one will suggest "This is on me" as a vital, significant, or long-enduring book. But I think the branch librarians were right in choosing it out of the spring publications as a book worth the reading, particularly if you have any interest in the trials and tribulations of a popular young author.

The second book that the twelve branch librarians indicated as good reading is "I married adventure" by Osa Johnson, wife of the late Martin Johnson, explorer and photographer extraordinary of wild life. "I married adventure" is written with frank, simple straight forwardness. It has different appeals for many different kinds of readers. The president of the American museum of natural history writes in his foreword, "Here, in a story about everywhere

else in the world, is romantic Americana that will one day be history. These pages are themselves adventure. Here the watch-maker's boy from Independence out in Kansas meets the Sante Fe engineer's daughter from Chanute, plain people from the prairies. Against that homespun background is woven a life and career filled with exotic color." President Davison goes on to say that "I married adventure" is "no mere travelogue and picture album, but rather the intimate tale of two lives... boy and girl from Kansas, pushing their horizons into far places."

"I married adventure," the lives the adventures of Martin and Osa Johnson, is a heart-warming, grand story. It will be an immensely popular book this summer, and a book that will remain popular for many years to come.

Martin Johnson was an adventurous boy from the very beginning, and blessed with parents who understood him, even if they didn't appreciate all of his exploits. When he was around eighteen, on a bet he started out to make the round trip from Chicago to London on exactly $4.25. He even got to Paris where for two months he was the mechanic for a merry-go-round in Luna Park. After that trip he tried to settle down in his father's jewelry story, but an offer to go along with Jack London on the cruise of the Snark lured him away from home, and gave him his first formal introduction to adventuring; he was hired by Jack London as a cook, but his companions soon found out that the ships engines could more safely be entrusted into him as a cook.

Osa Johnson was nine years younger than Martin; when she married him she was the farthest thing from a proper explorer's wife that

you could imagine. What she wanted was a nice home in some Kansas town, a family, and an occasional visit from her mother and father. She shuddered at the thought of snakes, and even colored slides of cannibals gave her bad dreams. She looked exactly like what she was---a pretty, innocent young American girl who hadn't yet finished high-school.

How these two opposites met and married, and how they made for themselves a happy and adventurous life, makes, as I said, a heart-warming and memorable tale.

You might be interested particularly, in her picture of George Eastman, who went along on one of their expeditions: Mr. Eastman, Osa Johnson writes, "was extremely kind, sensitive, resourceful and versatile. He loved to cook and it was grand fun to see him take a turn at our clumsy little camp stove. (we) stood and watched in awe as one after another there emerged delicious muffins, corn bread, beaten biscuits,... lemon tarts and hickleberry pie. Mr. Eastman also rigged up an engenious device for a shower bath, in our temporary camp, and was proud as Punch over his accomplishment."

The time has come, the announcer says, for me to leave the air, so I shall simply remind you again that the two books I have talked about today are among the season's finest reading, in the opinion of the branch librarians. The books are "This is on me" by Katharine Brush, and "I married adventure" by Osa Johnson.

The Library Book Parade
WHEC
June 20, 1940
5:00 P.M.

Music:

Announcer: Here comes the Library Book Parade.

Provins:

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This is LeRoy Provins leading the Library Book Parade, a weekly program about books and authors prepared and presented by the Rochester Public Library.

The other day I saw a cartoon that I imagine a lot of you also saw. The cartoon showed the chair of the President of the United States covered with very long, sharp and uncomfortable looking spikes. And standing beside the chair was Uncle Sam muttering to himself, "I can't understand why anyone wants to sit in it."

Well, now that the conventions of the Republicans and Democrats are only a few weeks off--conventions in which the presidential candidate of each party will be chosen--you and I are going to see again the familiar political scene of many men scrambling for the chance to sit on that spike-covered presidential chair.

After Calvin Coolidge had left the White House, he remarked that "It costs to be President." Henry Stoddard has used that phrase of Coolidge's, "It costs to be President," as the title of a book about our American presidents and about the other men who ran for the presidency and failed. Stoddard, the author, was for twenty-five years, from 1900 to 1925, editor and owner of the New York Evening Mail, a position that put him into intimate relationship with the politics and politicians of his time. His book is

not a collection of short, familiar biographies, or anything of that sort; it is an informal, readable account of practical politics working at its greatest task, the election of a president; it is an account of the tricks and quirks that place men in the White House, or keep them out of the White House.

For example, Mrs. James G. Blaine's simple refusal to see a caller was once responsible for her husband's failure to obtain the Republican nomination, and probably the Presidency. In the convention of 1876, Blaine was one of the strongest candidates; he needed only twenty-seven votes for the nomination, and he would have had those twenty-seven if it hadn't been for his wife. It happened this way: several weeks before the convention, Blaine was ill and at home in bed; one of the minor rival candidates for the nominator came to call on the sick man, but he wasn't admitted. Mrs. Blaine sent down to him the message that she was not at home. She wouldn't receive him. Well, in the convention this same minor candidate had the Kentucky delegation behind him, and when the Blaine managers came around to them for their votes, they decided they were "not at home." They would avenge the insult to their candidate by refusing to vote for the husband of the woman who had made the insult. And so one of the strongest politicians of his time, a man who was almost sure to be elected president, didn't get the chance because his wife decided to be high-handed in whom she would and would not see.

It's stories like that one that Henry Stoddard tells in his book, "It costs to be president."

There's another good story that Stoddard tells---the story of a taxi ride to decide a presidency. In the Republican convention

of 1920, two men--Lowden and Wood--had such equal voting strength that neither one could get the nomination for presidency without the consent of the other. The convention was dead-locked, and something had to be done. So the two rival candidates got into a taxi cab, and rode around Chicago for hours as the meter clicked away adding up the fare. They were trying to see which one of them would give way to the other and accept the second place on the ticket. Neither of them would--it had to be first place or nothing for both of them. And so, the two strong candidates didn't get the nomination--instead it went to a little known man, Warren Harding. He was, for all practical purposes, nominated and elected during a taxi ride.

It's interesting, I think, to know the prophetic remark that Mrs. Warren Harding made some months before the convention, according to Mr. Stoddard. She said, "I've seen the inside of the White House. The office is killing Wilson as surely as if he had been stabbed at his desk." And she pleaded, "Don't ask Warren to run."

I don't know if many of you would want to read "It costs to be president" in its entirety; while it is informal and popular in its style, it is also filled with names and details of old campaigns that most of us have never even heard of. If you are unusually interested in national politics, then, of course, you will find every page of this book exciting. If you have only the average intelligent interest in politics, you will find only parts of it amusing or instructive, and sometimes, pathetic.

Another book that I found on the shelves of the Rochester Public Library the other day is "The great game of politics"

by Frank R. Kent. Mr. Kent says that his book is "an effort to present the elementary human facts about politics, politicians and political machines, candidates and their ways, for the benefit of the average citizen." The book has gone through quite a few editions since it was written, and has always been popular, largely, I think, because it's a realistic, hard-headed manual of politics. The author, Frank Kent, has been a journalist and editor for many years, usually writing about the political life of this country. When he talks of politics, politicians, and political machines, candidates and their ways, he knows whereof he speaks.

In one part of his book, Kent calculates that there are not less than 150,000 persons scattered through the country whom it is fair to classify as active candidates for elective positions. And he comments, "The interesting thing about these candidates--all of them--whether they win or lose, is that they are chronic candidates. Once a candidate always a candidate. It is an apparently incurable disease. No man has yet been discovered," Frank Kent says, "Who after election to an office, did not want either to hold on to that office for another term or run for a better one--if there is a better one."

And, adds Kent in "The great game of politics," "it is not only the successful candidate who gets the office who becomes a chronic candidate. Exactly the same thing is true of the unsuccessful one--even those who aspire but do not get as far as the primaries. Once let his friends or a newspaper so much as mention a man's name as 'available material' or the 'right sort of man for this job--and from that time on he is running. He never stops."

In this book, Kent has one particularly illuminating chapter called "What really stirs the voters." He first says that the one general maxim to remember in predicting election results is this: "Prosperity absorbs all criticism." The truth of that maxim, he says, was proved indisputably in the Coolidge-Davis campaign of 1924. The Republicans had been in office, and the Democrats were easily able to prove that amazing dishonesty and fraud had taken place, if the Democrats could make the Republican party responsible, then it was easily argued that the voters would revolt and turn the Republicans out of office. But, that didn't happen--despite the Republican responsibility at that time for dishonesty and fraud, the people returned the Republicans to power in 1924. Why? Well, says Frank Kent, "Prosperity absorbs all criticism." The country had been prosperous under the Republicans, and therefore they saw no reason to change. They were only bored by all the talk of dishonesty.

There are only two issues that can excite the country and change its normal political thinking in times of prosperity, says the author of this book. These issues are, first, some religious consideration, and secondly some issue that seems on the one side to have great moral significance, and on the other side, to be an unwarranted interference with the personal liberty of the individual; such an issue was prohibition. And Frank Kent concludes that "aside from these two classes, if there is any other kind of question of public policy to which the voters respond when there is no general unemployment, it has not been discovered."

Mr. Kent also makes the unflattering observation that "the overwhelming majority of the voters are swayed by their inherent

prejudices and are impervious to argument and reason."

Now there are two books about practical politics in America, "It costs to be president" by Henry Stoddard, and "The great game of politics" by Frank R. Kent. Both books are easy to read, and certainly help the average voter see through the camouflage, down to the real men and the issues they represent. They are particularly timely reading now that the party conventions are once again so near at hand.

About the presidents of the United States, hundreds of volumes of individual and collected biographies have been written, of course. Not all of the presidents make very good biographical material; the lives of some were rather dull and uninteresting--they arrived at the presidency through some peculiar twist of fate, and not because their past experience and their ability warranted the high office. Such presidents are best forgotten.

Browsing through the books on the presidents and their families that are in the library's Biography Division, I came across a volume that was popular a short while back, and still is as enjoyable as the day it was published. It is "The Woodrow Wilsons," by Eleanor Wilson McAdoo. It has two primary appeals--first a charming story of a fine mother and father and their three girls, a likeable account of civilized American family life; its second appeal is the intimate picture it gives of Woodrow Wilson, a picture so much at variance with the public's conception of the man that both the people who loved him and the people who disliked him could well read this book.

Eleanor Wilson McAdoo, who was the youngest daughter of the Woodrow Wilsons, spends as much, if not more, time, writing about

her mother than she does about her father. Mrs. Wilson was a lady of great charm and dignity. I like this paragraph in which Mrs. McAdoo says, "Mother never used a trace of powder, but once when I opened one of her incredibly neat drawers, I found a rabbit's foot that was unquestionably red at the tip. I put it back, feeling very guilty, and scrutinized her carefully for any evidence that she had used it. Years later she told me that sometimes, when she was going out in the evening, she crushed red rose leaves and rubbed them on her cheeks with the rabbit's foot, keeping it, of course, a dark secret from us."

The Wilson children were very proud of their father when he was a professor and later president of Princeton University. They had a book of question, "The thumb confession book," and to the question, "Who is the world's greatest orator" they always replied, "Professor Wilson," and also made all their playmates do the same. They could never understand the obstinacy of the Purves children who insisted on replying that the world's greatest orator was their father, Dr. Purves, another Princeton professor. Mrs. McAdoo says, "I used to wonder how other children could be really happy without a father like ours. Even when I was very young, I was conscious of a feeling of satisfaction that I was I, because of him."

In another place, she remarks that it always amazed her to hear her father called "cold" or "grim" or "aloof." "Warm close friendships were a necessity to him," she says, "a stimulant that he prized, guarded and required in full measure."

I started out to talk about books on politics because of the imminence of the political conventions, and have ended up with a biography of the Woodrow Wilsons. Unless I want to stretch things

a bit, there's not much connection. What connection there is lies in the fact that Mrs. McAdoo tells of what her family was like when her father was just an obscure university teacher, and then of the changes that occured in the family as he dramatically rose to the prominence of the President of the United States.

Music

Announcer: Here comes the Library Book Parade.

Provins:

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This is LeRoy Provins leading the Library Book Parade, a weekly program about books and authors prepared and presented by the Rochester Public Library.

Jerome Beatty claims that he had the best assignment any reporter has ever had, and after I tell you about that assignment I think you will agree with him. I'm sure that all the newspaper men I know would give away their last typewriter and write their stories in longhand for the chance of an assignment like the one Mr. Beatty had.

He was called one day by the editor of the Readers' Digest and casually told that this was his assignment: he could travel any place in the world he wanted to, spend as much time and money as he needed to spend, and all that he had to produce were bang-up stories about Americans who were doing unusual and unknown things in different parts of the world. His bosses were sure that hidden away in obscure corners of the globe must be some Americans with magnificent accomplishments to their credit, but Americans who were little known to the world in general--and, his bosses wanted Beatty to find these people, and write about them.

Well, of course Beatty accepted the assignment, but he wasn't quite sure where and how to begin. He says that he couldn't just wander around the world kicking furiously through the underbrush and yelling, "Hi-yo, Americans!" in the hope of scaring up a few obscure and interesting ones. He was on the spot that Stanley, of Stanley and Livingston fame, would have been if some one had said, "Stanley, go out and find me some lost people. There must be a lot of them in this world." As Mr. Beatty remarks in self pity, "When Stnaley went after

Livingstone he knew, lucky Henry, that there was such a man." Beatty did, however, get a few names to start with from all sorts of people and organizations, from the Department of Commere to the missionary societies.

By the time he had completed his assignemtnt he had found fifteen eligible Americans, and had covered 46,000 miles in fifteen months. He took his wife along with him because he wanted her to share the fun, and not because of any coercion in the Maggy and Jiggs manner. They got along quite well together as travelers, except when the packing of bags was to be done--then each blamed the other for carrying along too much unnecessary impedimenta. Mr. Beatty says that finally they shipped a lot of useless stuff home and discovered "that more soothing to the nerves than a warm, perfumed bath in a marble pool, with lute players hidden among the palm trees, is a suit-case that will close without being sat upon."

But I've been talking too long about a book without mentioning its title. The book of the day, then, is "Americans all over," by Jerome Beatty. The author's name doesn't mean very much, but he is a successful writer of magazine articles; after he had been on this trip for some months he became worried about the quality of the material he was sending back, whether or not his booses liked it, so he cabled to ask them, and he got back the answer: "You are world's ace reporter." Now this book of his, "Americans all over," has been reasonably popular, but not as popular as it deserves to be. I have thoroughly enjoyed reading it, and I believe it to be the kind of book that can be recommended to a large audience. It is written without pretentiosness of any kind--Jerome Beatty and wife knew they were inexperienced travelers who couldn't speak a word in any language except English, and they're the first people to admit their deficiencies. The book is written with abundant good humor; the author is an experienced writer who has a clever way with words.

And the people he writes about are certainly worth reading about; as I told you he was commissioned to do this assignment by magazine editors, so these stories have appeared first in popular periodicals, but even though you read them there, the book will still be interesting to you. It contains much material that did not appear in the magazines, and all the stories have been rewriiten with added details. You know that magazines impose a restraint on the vocabularies and ideas of their authors that publishers of books do not impose; the public that reads magazines must be treated with more caution than the book-reading public.

Well, anyway, I think "Americans all over" is a splendid book, and I hope a lot of you have the pleasure of reading it some time. It is a cheering experience to read about these splendid Americans who are accomplishing so much in difficult paces. I remember the story Beatty tells about the native he met in Syria who wistfully wished that America would come and run his country.

"'Americans,' he said, 'are kind.' He thought for a moment, dodged a camel in the road and then gave as his considered opinion, 'Instead of the French, I believe I would rather have the Turks back as masters here. When you bribe a French official, he may keep the money and do nothing for you. The Turks are honest. When you bribe them, they keep their word.'" In fact, reading this book is a good cure for any feeling of inferiority we may have about ourselves as Americans; you learn in this book that a large part of the underprivileged people of this world look upon Americans as people who can do anything, and who willdo it bravely and with kindness.

The first American who qualified for a place in this exclusive group of men and women whose accomplishments are great was Dr. Paul W. Harrison- a graduate of Johns Hopkins University and one of the world's finest doctors. Dr. Harrison is a medical missionary in Muscat, Arabia---"the hottest city in the world"--and--its main

industry being the drying of fish--probably the most evil-smelling (city in the world)." Temperatures reach 108 degrees in the daytime and 115 degrees at night. Mr. and Mrz. Beatty were there in May and the nights were so hot, Beatty says he welcomed the early morning sun because he could lie in it and cool off.

Well, in this hot-box Dr. Harrison and his wife cure the ills of thousands of very dirty and underfed Arabs. In his twenty-eight years of practice, the most Dr. Harrison has ever got for a major operation is fifteen dollars, but usually the fee is around thrity-seven cents, or simply nothing. Dr. Harrison was a promising medical school graduate and he could have made a fortune for himself in this country, but he had the idea that the way to have fun is not to make money but to go around ehlping folks whose luck is not as good as yours. So, off he went to Eastern Arabia to practice medicine--and what a fine job he has done.

He has made important discoveries in medicine ~~that~~ and ~~have made him~~ a world-wide authority on certain diseases and bodily ills. He says he could make more discovereies if he could only perform some post-mortems on some Arabs, but the Mohammedan religion ~~won~~ wont allow ~~them~~ that. He thinks, for instance, the secret of appendicitis may be found in Arabia, because for twenty-five years he never found a case of appendicitis, but in the last few years, when the natives have have been living and eating more like us, appendicits has begun to appear.

Lacking sufficient money to purchase much of the modern doctor's equipment, Dr. Harrison carries on one of the amazing medical practices in the world. A tall, thin, wiry man of 55, he has become of the great white men of his section of the world, an American who rightly belongs in this book, "Americans all over."

Another American whom Jerome Beatty met in his travels and who is in this book is Bayard Dodge, president of the American University at Beirut. Beatty says that since the American University is neither a ruin nor mentioned in the Bible, most tourists never see it, and few people in the

realize it is one of the world's most effective and colorful educational institutions. Nor do people know that the school's president, Bayard Dodge, is the most respected man in all the Near East.

Dodge comes from a wealthy American family, and has dedicated his life to the University—not only does he work without pay, but he and his friends have donated millions of dollars to the school.

The American University at Beirut, under Dodge's presidency, has developed into an amazingly fine school—about sixteen hundred students are enrolled, they come from forty-five different countries, and are about equally divided between Christians and non-Christians. With so many religions and nationalities represented, you might well expect the University to be a turbulent place, but it isn't. Dodge has only one rule for them, and it is this: "Be ladies and gentlemen. Respect the religions and nationality of others." Although most of the teachers are Christians, Bayard Dodge does not permit anyone to attempt to convert the non-Christian students—he prefers to make better Jews out of Jews, better Mohammedans out of Mohammedans, better Christians out of Christians. As you read about the work of Bayard Dodge, you too will realize that here is another great American whom Jerome Beatty has found in travels.

All together I think that "Americans all over" contains fifteen exhbitis of our compatriots at work in foreign coutnries. He tells of a Harvard graduate whom the pygmies regard as a white god; of a missionary teacher who got the Arabs to listen to him by pulling their aching teeth; of a New Englander who balanced Hungary's budget; og a Chicagoan who takes merry-go-rounds and tattoed women up jungle trails in Borneo giving carnival shows for the wild men; and of many more. Interesting as these stories are, another part of the book is equally good—the part in which he tells the story of how he and his wife tracked these people down. As I expect I told you at the beginning of this talk, Mr. and Mrs. Beatty didn't know very much about

foreign travel when they started out, so they saw everything with wide open andslightly surprised eyes. They had a fine time, and they give you one in reading their book, "American all over."

I think that what Mr. Beatty has to say about the world after he had seen so much of it is worth quoting

The complete radio activity of the Rochester (N.Y.) Public Library includes a weekly broadcast during the school year to children in the fifth and sixth grades, a weekly program of book talks and reviews for adults, and an occasional series devoted to local history. At this writing, we are negotiating the broadcasting of a winter series of free public lectures sponsored by us and held weekly in our auditorium. This schedule of activity embraces the three radio stations in Rochester.

The script included in this book is from the adult series of book talks, of which we have presented about sixty-five. Ordinarily we follow the plan of talking about three or four books that are related either through their subject or their authorship. We vary this plan by occasional interviews with persons representing some special phase or interest of books and reading. The first adult series ever presented by us was in 1938 and concerned our own resources and facilities. Now, however, we think of our radio programs not as a publicity medium but as an opportunity for another public library service to the community, and one that is rich in good-will towards us.

John Adams Lowe

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The LIBRARY BOOK PARADE broadcast January 24, 1939 was an extemporaneous interview between Mrs. Harper Sibley and Mr. LeRoy G. Provins, concerning the then current mid-winter exposition of the Council of Church Women.