

# THE FIRST READER—By Harry Hansen

## \$10,000 Prize Novel Portrays With Fidelity Home Life of Hindus

"SON OF THE MOON." A novel. By Joseph George Hitrec. New York, Harper, \$3.

"A HOG ON ICE: AND OTHER CURIOUS EXPRESSIONS." By Dr. Charles Earle Funk. Illustrated by Tom Funk. New York, Harper, \$3.

MOST OF THE news that comes out of India is sensational. Massacres on the border, riots in the towns, bejeweled maharajas with fantastic courts; millions engaged in religious rites at the sacred rivers.

In all this the orderly Hindu family, engaged in providing a home for its sons and daughters like families everywhere else, gets left out. It isn't news.

So maybe it's news that Joseph George Hitrec wins the Harper \$10,000 prize with a story of Hindu life, "Son of the Moon."

Readers who have missed Christine Weston's stories and still cherish memories of child brides from reading Katherine Mayo's "Mother India" may be surprised at the orderly manner in which a young Hindu, who admires European ways, is enabled, on his return from England, to recognize that his homeland, too, has something to give him.

MR. HITREC'S HERO is Vijay Ram Singh, 24-year-old member of a Rajput caste—equals of the Brahmins, without being Brahmin. He was the first to achieve a solo flight from India to England, thereafter studying aeronautics as well as English life, and making his first "white female conquest."

Returned home, he was restless and full of plans for flying and lecturing, and spreading western ideas, but the calm, reasonable attitude of his father, a government employee; the admonitions of his mother; the practical advice of his rich uncle, a newspaper owner, made him think. The end was compromise. Vijay conceded something, and the family gave in, too.

The birth of a useful citizen of the new India is treated sympathetically by Mr. Hitrec. The author, born in Croatia, visited India at the age of 20 on vacation and stayed there until 1946, working for English firms and writing articles and stories. He has observed well and written a full, deliberately planned account of Vijay's experience.

VIJAY came back to India patrolling the religious rites of his fathers—they were superstitious to him. His mother was quite willing to let him find his own way, but suggested that he would not be hurt by conforming. He took baths at home, so why should he object to the ritual bath at the temple?

His father was interested in having him settle down. Vijay was handsome; some girls sought him out, especially Thelma Morrison, a Eurasian. When he became clear to Vijay that she detested Hindu life he was revolted. His father proposed that he marry and Vijay objected: "Has this been discussed behind my back?" His father replied dryly: "It was. Parents still have that right."

His choice of Chandra, daughter of a feminist leader, made him retort: "She paints her nails. You wouldn't want to marry a girl who only talks of female suffrage."

Chandra was 17 when they met and it is true that her remarks seem more adult than her age. Yet it was Chandra that he was to respect, and later love, for she gave him stronger spiritual support than he had from the woman who had merely cared for his body.

YET THERE is little of the spiritual and the intangible in this story, thus differing from E. M. Forster's famous novel, A PASSAGE TO INDIA. Mr. Hitrec is not describing the groping Hindu soul but the external activities of an enterprising young man who finds his vocation. The brief reference to the Elephanta caves recalls the Forster book, but Vijay has nothing in common with the sensitive Hindu who suffered

such deep hurt by his contact with the English.

The position of women in India, always something of a mystery to western minds, is made clear in this story; their love is an influential thing in the family. Tara, Vijay's sister, becomes a radical; Chandra shows Vijay that girls, too, have minds. Mr. Hitrec's novel is a friendly book, giving us a feeling of kinship with the Hindu family he has described so understandingly.

HOW many times have you accused a man of pulling wires, heard an actor's swan song, neat around the bush, given the Bronx cheer, found something to beat the Dutch and seen an angry man act like a bull in a china shop?

There's a kitful of phrases to lose into your speech. Half the people who use them don't know where they come from. But Charles Earle Funk, the dictionary-maker, has amused himself jotting down the origins of familiar phrases, and here's a whole book about them: "A Hog on Ice and Other Curious Expressions," illustrated by Tom Funk.

This isn't the first book of its kind—there's "A Thousand Familiar Sayings" on my shelf, but it's the latest and full of information for people who live the life of Riley and don't know where they got that way of expressing it.

A lot of these expressions are very old, others are new. We are coming them every day. To be taken for a ride is only about 25 years old, since it was first used in the gang wars of the 1920s, and stayed there until 1946, working for English firms and writing articles and stories. He has observed well and written a full, deliberately planned account of Vijay's experience.

He lists "to cook with gas" as meaning up to date, and says he doesn't know why it should imply ultramodernity, since electric stoves are more modern than gas. Let us inform Mr. Funk that it came into use when the gas companies were first advertising gas stoves with the phrase cook with gas, and that it ought to be on its way out soon.

As for "through thick and thin," that, says Mr. Funk, can be found in Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew." It's still around.

COLLECTS SAYINGS—Dr. Charles Earle Funk, whose new book, "A Hog on Ice," is a collection of familiar phrases and their origins.

Day Anthology Due  
"The Best of Clarence Day," a new anthology of writings by the creator of "Life With Father," will be published Apr. 29 by Alfred A. Knopf.

### CROSSWORD PUZZLE

#### Medical Scientist

HORIZONTAL 55 Female relative  
1,7 Pictorial  
medical scientist, Lord

VERTICAL  
13 Unemployed  
14 Set of teeth  
15 Rig  
16 Take into custody  
18 Gazelle  
19 Out of (prefix)  
20 Deer track  
21 Golf mound  
23 South Dakota (ab.)  
24 River barrier  
25 Crimson  
27 False god  
29 Roster  
30 Unit of weight  
31 Born  
34 Let it stand!  
36 Gull-like bird  
37 Auricle  
39 Neither  
40 Size of shot  
42 College cheer  
44 Horse's gait  
46 Mystic syllable  
48 Note in Guido's scale  
50 Closser  
52 Hawaiian pepper  
53 He revolutionized—with the vital principles of autopsies

Answer to Previous Puzzle

ACROSS  
1. HAL  
2. LEHMAN  
3. ADOLPH  
4. LOSE  
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55. ADOLPH



KNIGHT AND SQUIRE—"Don Quixote and Sancho," canvas by Luis Alberto Acuna, outstanding Colombian painter, is one of an exhibit of Mr. Acuna's paintings now on display in Indiana University's Fine Arts building in Bloomington. Now in the United States on a Guggenheim fellowship, Mr. Acuna will visit IU to lecture on his painting methods at 4 p. m. next Tuesday.

## Mrs. Cook's New Book Avoids Sensationalism In Profound Treatment of Prejudice

"STORM AGAINST THE WALL." A novel. By Fannie Cook. New York, Doubleday, \$3.

By HENRY BUTLER  
NEARLY TWO YEARS ago, Fannie Cook won the first George Washington Carver Award for her novel, "Mrs. Palmer's Honey."

That novel, dealing with Negro-white relationships in St. Louis, was a valuable contribution to literature on the subject. In "Storm Against the Wall," Mrs. Cook has written a novel much broader and more profound. The new book carries a St. Louis Jewish family through two generations, from 1904 to 1946.

It thus has a panoramic effect which lends dignity and balance to the story. This time also, Mrs. Cook deals with prejudice problems—both Negro-white and Jewish-gentile. The scope of her narrative permits her to represent prejudice as complex and interactive, not just melodramatically one-sided. And so she avoids the hazards of momentarily sensational novels like "Gentleman's Agreement" and "Kingsblood Royal."

"Storm Against the Wall" is one of the very best treatments of prejudice in contemporary fiction, if only because it orientates rather than isolates prejudice. Mrs. Cook shows how the ugly facts of discrimination and injustice fit into a social pattern. She thus comes closer than other novelists have done to explaining why these evils persist from generation to generation.

World War I interrupts Marc's legal career. When he comes home, he goes into merchandising with his successful uncles. As a man of active social conscience, Marc serves on welfare committees and tries to make his contribution to solving community problems.

But he finds, as everyone else who has tried has found, that ideals are still way ahead of practices. People—a few people—will want the justice of democratic doctrine, but there's always a strong impulse to postpone immediate action. "Let's

## 'Words to Live By' Contains Thoughts of Rich and Poor

"WORDS TO LIVE BY," Edited by William Nichols. New York, Simon & Schuster, \$2.75.

By EMMA RIVERS MILNER  
JOT DOWN THE NAMES of your favorites among the world's great in various fields of endeavor and then check the list against the contributors to "Words to Live By."

You are sure to find that several of your selections duplicate the persons quoted in this new book edited by William Nichols and published by Simon & Schuster.

Mr. Nichols, also the editor of This Week magazine, gives a thumbnail summary of his book in its sub-title: "A little treasury of inspiration and wisdom selected and interpreted by 64 eminent men and women."

HE WROTE LETTERS to many persons in all parts of the world and asked them to quote for him some lines they had found very sustaining along with comments on the passages. They responded with the contents of this book. Their offerings are as different as the men and women themselves.

Because Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick long has been admired by countless citizens of the United States and sees life and the world in the large, his section is offered here as representative. However, clergymen are in the minority in the book, the writers being taken from many professions. Says Dr. Fosdick first quoting Mr. Attlee:

"We cannot make a Heaven in our country and leave a hell outside." Clement Attlee.

"PRIME MINISTER ATTLEE

## Follows Plato—New Tract Is Socially Nearsighted

"IDEAS HAVE CONSEQUENCES." By Richard M. Weaver. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, \$2.75.

THE TROUBLE WITH modern society is that we've ignored or forgotten the wisdom of the ages. That's a brief and, I think, fair statement of Richard M. Weaver's thesis in "Ideas Have Consequences."

And if Mr. Weaver were content to elaborate on our failure to combine old with new ideas for the best features of both, I think his book might have greater validity than it has.

Unfortunately, he has chosen to write a conservative, not to say reactionary, tract. And while it is done in choice rhetoric and embellished with apt and elegant quotations, it suffers from some what the same social nearsightedness that afflicts Westbrook Pegler's writings.

IT'S FAR EASIER to make bold conservative or reactionary pronouncements than it is to refute them. Mr. Weaver may know that, and I'm pretty certain Mr. Pegler does.

Indeed, it would take another book almost the size of Mr. Weaver's 187-page essay to deal systematically with his statements. Mr. Weaver's proposition, admittedly Platonic, that "there is no knowledge at the level of sensation," gets into the complicated field of epistemology, which is a mine-lined word meaning how do we know what we think we know?

The only real knowledge, Mr. Weaver agrees with Plato, is of universals: Truth, beauty, justice and so on, in the abstract. Now there's no objection to anybody being a Platonist. But when Platonism becomes an intellectual jeep towing carts groaning under heavily loaded phrases like "the delusion that man is by nature good," then there's cause for question.

I'm not going to argue with Mr. Weaver about the goodness or badness of human nature. Mr. Weaver teaches at the University of Chicago, and we may assume the university authorities regard him as somebody who knows what he's talking about. I'll suggest timidly that there are divergent views on human nature. I'll go still farther, running the risk of having a quotation slammed in my face, and say that Mr. Weaver's phrase has little, if any, non-Weaverian meaning.

MR. WEAVER further says: "Equality is a disorganizing concept in so far as human relationships mean order." He's in favor of what he terms "distinction and hierarchy." In GI language, the highest and best things are off limits to us enlisted men.

Well, you can take this kind of thing just as you can take Irving Babbitt's "Rousseau and Romanticism." In its way, it's logical and brilliant, like Babbitt. But it's equally limited, cold and prematurely senile.

I wish I had space to discuss adequately Mr. Weaver's diagnosis of jazz and swing which he includes among symptoms of our social decay. He doesn't seem to have been much of a hep cat. More's the pity, since more frivolity at the right time might have given his thinking some leavening of humor.

The world certainly is in a bad way, as Mr. Weaver painstakingly reminds us. But it will take a book far more profound, far more illumined by the insight of experience and wisdom than Mr. Weaver's, to make me want to wear the white ribbon of neo-Platonism.

## Volume of Essays On Sale Mar. 22

Virginia Woolf's second posthumous volume of essays will be released by Harcourt, Brace Mar. 22, under the title, "The Moment and Other Essays."

Harcourt, Brace also will bring out on the same day a one-volume edition of "The Common Reader" and "The Second Common Reader." These two collections of Mrs. Woolf's essays previously have been available only in separate volumes and have been out of print for some time.

## 'Home to Hermitage'

"Home to the Hermitage," by Alfred Leland Crab, a new novel about Andrew Jackson, will be published Monday by Bobbs-Merrill.

## Publication Date Set

A new book by the Rt. Rev. McGr. Fulton J. Sheen, "Communism and the Conscience of the West," is announced for publication Monday by Bobbs-Merrill.

## A Religious Center With Civic Circumference

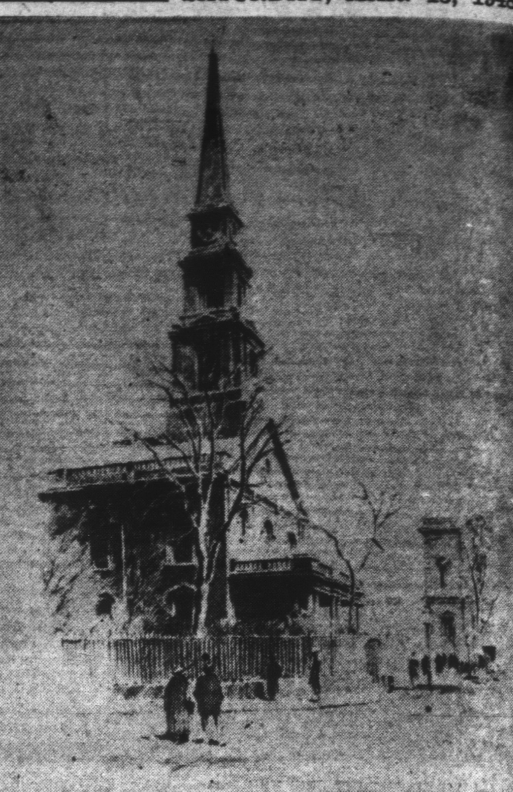
11 A. M. Sunday  
Dr. E. Burdette Backus  
Presents the Seventh of a Series of Addresses on  
GREAT BOOKS  
Frederick Nietzsche's  
"Beyond Good and Evil"

## Book Hits Capital

"Plunder," a new novel by Samuel Hopkins Adams concerned with graft and corruption in Washington governmental circles, will be published Mar. 29 by Random House.

## Autobiography Ready

Max Eastman's autobiography, "Enjoyment of Living," is announced for March 31 publication by Harper.



SHOWS HOW—This drawing of St. Mark's Church, New York, by Otto R. Eggers is one of numerous examples of draftsmanship in "A Complete Guide to Drawing, Illustration, Cartooning and Painting."

## New Book Offers Wide Scope Of Problems in Drawing

"A COMPLETE GUIDE TO DRAWING, ILLUSTRATION, CARTOONING AND PAINTING." By Gene Byrnes and A. Thornton Bishop. New York, Simon & Schuster, \$5.95.

THERE ARE PLENTY of specialized books on problems of drawing. Few volumes, however, offer a comprehensive treatment of nearly all phases of drawing, including cartoons, illustrations, architectural renderings and other commercial and noncommercial forms of draftsmanship.

Gene Byrnes, cartoonist and creator of "Reglar Fellows," and A. Thornton Bishop, executive editor of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. publications, have compiled what may be the most useful and stimulating single volume in the field to date.

HERE IS A BOOK to make even inexperienced hands reach for pen or pencil. It starts with basic fundamentals and goes on through various stages to the completion of each type of problem. With 138 contributors, numbering some of the country's outstanding illustrators, cartoonists, commercial artists and comic-strip creators, the book presents examples of how many of these men and women tackle problems of proportion, perspective, shading and similar difficulties.

EVEN AN ARTISTICALLY untalented reader will find the "Complete Guide" most entertaining to look through. It's a beautiful job of planning, printing and illustration.

What's more, it has the advantage over many other such volumes of being moderately priced. It should make a most welcome gift for the high school youngster who shows interest in drawing.

## Biography of Handel To Be Ready Soon

A new biography of Handel entitled "Handel: The Messiah: A Touchstone of Taste," by Robert Manson Myers, is announced for Mar. 23 publication by Macmillan. An analysis of Handel's career in 18th-Century London, it is described as a "chapter in the history of British musical taste."

## New Book on Horses

"Modern Quarter Horse Sires," by Nelson C. Nye, a study of the world's fastest horses in the quarter-mile, will be published March 17 by William Morrow & Co.

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