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## THE BOOKSHELF

### SHADOWS ON THE ROCK

By WILLA CATHER

HERE indeed is a refreshing book written by one of the outstanding writers of today. Its theme and style of writing is so different from most of the modern novels that it stands out like an oasis in the desert. The nature of the book is such that one may pick it up and read any part without difficulty. Miss Cather is gifted with the ability to make the reader live the lives of her characters and lose themselves entirely in the story. We certainly recommend it to all engineers for their cultural development, not because of the story that it tells, but because of the superb portrayal of the French people and their manner of living in the early days of settlement. Those who know predict that this book is an outstanding candidate for the Pulitzer Prize for the best novel of the year, which should surely be enough recommendation for anyone.

Miss Cather takes a cross section of the life of her characters, and shows its natural unfolding, without any particular unified story or plot. The story concerns chiefly the life of the personal physician to the Governor of Canada and his daughter. The scene is laid in the French Settlement of Quebec in the middle of the seventeenth century. The story of the apothecary and his daughter, their ups and downs, their emotions, and the life of the people in the settlement are pictured so clearly and vividly that we can only say: "Read the story and enjoy one of the finest books ever written."—J. E. B.

### "I'D LIKE TO DO IT AGAIN"

By OWEN DAVIS

*I'd Like to Do It Again* is the title of Mr. Davis' autobiography published recently; and if the swift, jovial style in which he writes is indicative of the way he has lived, he probably would get the utmost enjoyment out of doing it again. The book's two hundred odd pages are chock full of amusing incidents, and even the commonplace things are told with a spirit that makes you race through the entire course of this busy life before you put the book aside.

There is sympathy and encouragement here, too, for those of us who find a lack of ambition to do things, for those of us who seem content to take life as it comes without shouldering the musket or the hoe to show the world that here is someone to be reckoned with. He doesn't seem to think that such indolence is a bit alarming. A Harvard career, for which most of us would give a great deal, was just another boredom for Owen Davis. He wouldn't try for grades, he made only "a fair football player," took a mild interest in a drama club, and waited for a diploma.

As soon as he had saved enough money to take him from Kentucky, where he had been employed since

graduation, to New York City, he fled from industry forever, and landed in the great city with health, youth, and twelve dollars. After writing several plays without selling them, he turned actor to make enough to pay expenses. How he sold his first play, his experiences with great producers familiar to every theater lover, how he came to be such a prolific writer after such a lackadaisical youth, and his general observations on life—all are told in a way that amply rewards the reader for a few hours spent with the book.

Though many of us have the desire, few have the courage to face life as he expresses it: "I have never in my life wanted to do, and in truth I have never done, any of the practical humdrum work of this extremely practical world, but have remained perfectly content to make faces at life and earn my living by drawing pictures on the wall." An extremely profitable business, this drawing pictures on the wall.

—ROMA MARGRAF

### MAID IN WAITING

By JOHN GALSWORTHY

THIS book, published in September, 1931, is hailed by literary critics to be a gem among the novels of today. It differs from Miss Cather's *Shadows on the Rock* in that the author has a very definite story to tell.

The story concerns a young English soldier from a family of character and breeding rather than wealth, who joins an American professor in an expedition to Bolivia as transportation chief. While in Bolivia, he is left alone in charge of the party for a period, during which time the natives cause considerable trouble, and finally in self-defense he is forced to kill one of them. Most of the party deserts, leaving him stranded in the wilds of the country. The American professor finally returns and is considerably incensed by the events occurring during his absence, so gives up the expedition.

After the young Englishman has returned to his country, the professor publishes a book on the expedition in which he lays all the blame for its failure on the young man and makes statements in it that are deleterious to his standing in the English Army, as well as to his reputation generally. The young man is blessed with an unusually attractive and capable sister who undertakes to clear her brother of the charges and restore him to grace. In this attempt she enlists the aid of their three uncles who are quite influential politically and otherwise. In an attempt to distract her brother's mind, she introduces him to an attractive and also capable, though poor, young lady. He wastes no time in falling in love with her and she more than returns his affection. Incidentally, the sister is attracted by the brother of the young lady and spends quite a bit of time in refusing his proposals though giving him hope of future success.

(Continued on Page 22)



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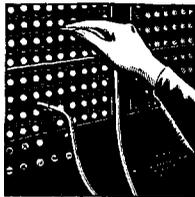
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#### BOOKSHELF

(Continued from Page 14)

By chance, the sister meets the professor and finally succeeds in having him withdraw his statements publicly and he later offers his apologies to the young man, who accepts them. The professor falls in love with the girl, which perhaps had considerable to do with his action, but she evidently resents his treatment of her brother even after his retraction. In spite of the professor's absolving him from blame, the Bolivian Government requests that the young Englishman be returned to that country to be tried for the murder of the native. The young lady with whom he is in love proposes to him immediately and they are married while he is still under the cloud of disgrace. The uncles and the sister use every possible influence to prevent his extradition, while his wife makes elaborate plans for his escape in the event of a conviction. Of course, he is freed and restored to his original position. However, the ending is typically Galsworthian in its lack of definiteness.—J. E. B.

#### GREEN HELL

By JULIAN DUGUID

THIS is a fascinating story of three men's journey through an unknown South American jungle located in Eastern Bolivia. The story is told in a very simple fashion with a noticeable and pleasing lack of the "I's" and "me's." It starts at Buenos Aires where the three, a Bolivian, commissioned by the government to explore and report on the Gran Chaco of Bolivia, an Englishman, a moving-picture operator, and the author, who at the start had not yet won his spurs as a writer, move up the Parana and Paraguay river. This mysterious stretch is inhabited by wild beasts, deadly insects, and hostile savages. Luckily the adventurers fall in with a Russian of whom it is said that when news reached London that the "Tiger-Man" was to accompany them the odds that they would cross the jungle alive fell from 5 to 1, to 3 to 1.

The young Irish author is quite effective in his choice of words and on the excellent bits of description inserted between the various adventures in the narrative. The adventures started with the journey, and every day the "amateurs" of the quartet had ample opportunity to add to their stock of jungle lore. In fact, when the trip ended all were qualified to pass a stiff examination in "How to Explore an Unexplored Jungle" (and Live). One very squeamish incident which the author passed, flags flying, was his holding one very live and uncooperative anaconda while his friend, the Englishman, took photographs of them both till he was satisfied with the poses. The whole story is shot through with humorous touches. Even in their most hair-raising experiences the attitude still shows, making it all seem like a holiday in Hell. The man who is the real hero is of course "Tiger-Man." Back in London the three occasionally meet, but the fourth chair is empty. The three silently look at it, then in unison raise their glasses to "Tiger-Man."

—H. M. McF.

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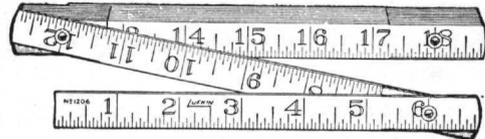
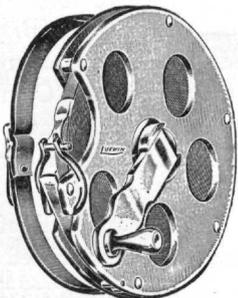
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