

Books on Trial

By JOHN C. TULY

A few years ago an enterprising publisher conceived the idea of depicting the history of different sections of the country by building stories around its leading rivers. The Rivers of America series was to have covered twelve different areas, my twelve different books, but the project proved so successful that already twenty-seven such books have been published.

Of the latest two, The Missouri by Stanley Vestal, \$2.50, is very good, but The Illinois, \$2.50, by Dave Fisher seems to me to be comparably inferior.

Everyone, of course, knows considerably about the great central area drained by the Missouri; comparatively few knew off-hand even the location of the Salinas, which flows through California in a northwesterly direction into the Bay of Monterey — territory which comprised numerous of the old Spanish Missions.

My criticism of this otherwise very interesting book lies in the fact that in the early part the author seems inclined to deprecate the Missionaries' efforts and to make slighting references which indicate either prejudice or misinterpretation.



In justice, however, it must be said that the atmosphere of later sections is necessarily different — so much so, in fact, that one might wonder if the same person wrote the earlier book.

Despite this criticism, the book is highly interesting to those who love California and are attracted by its early history.

It is difficult for a born Catholic to appreciate the problems which face a Protestant whose studies have led him in the direction of the Church. Many a noted Protestant who approached the gates failed to enter because he could not overcome the "past" asserted by his previous mental environment.

Constance Julian, reared in Parliament as an isolated Australian ranch, found the answer in her problems in books. She found that many Protestant writers had been preoccupied with things Catholic — admiring the treasures of the Church. In substance and in rhetoric role, but nevertheless remaining outside its portals because they failed to grasp its spirit.

In *Meadow Over English Literature*, \$1.50, Constance Julian analyzes English writers such as Cowper, Coleridge, Keats, Carlyle and Bennett; and numerous Americans, including Longfellow, Emerson and Hawthorne. She shows the consequences of the loss of Faith to some, and what the writers have meant to others, her particular thesis being the unfortunate effect of Reformation influences on the literature of succeeding generations.

Descendants of the "reformers" gradually erased the Jesus of the Gospels from their creeds. When Emerson spoke of the "pale negations of Unitarianism," or when Hawthorne or Longfellow wrote dubiously of their tragic inheritance, such sayings got scant notice. Sayings that did not "conform" were quietly buried. Catholics should understand more about these matters. This book will help them to appreciate their heritage.

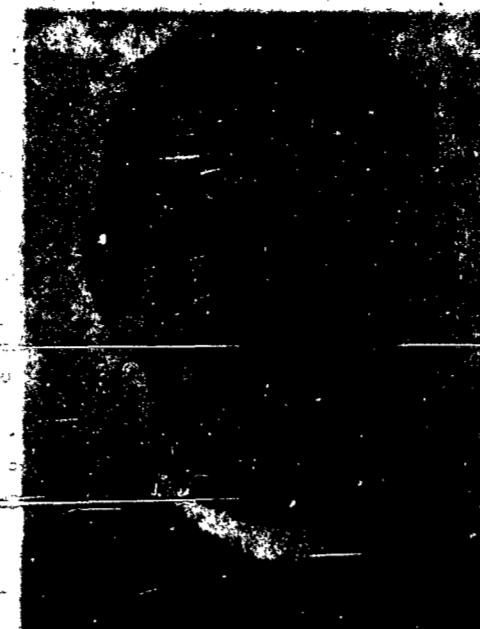
Although sub-titled, "Revelations of the Mystery," the author, Rev. H. A. Reinhold, has included in *The Good Book* numerous texts that are not strictly mystical but which may help to prepare the mind for truly mystical writings.

For example, he says that "neither prayer nor poetry are in themselves mystical" — but certain poems may be a better approach than theological treatises.

The quotations from various saints, teachers and philosophers are grouped under various headings, the purpose of which is not clear. It would have been better had the Editor furnished an introductory note to each chapter. However, as a collection of writings related in some manner to mysticism, the book may appeal to a limited number of reading workers willing to pay \$2.50.

Since holding up our Chart we have learned that *Time To Be Young*, \$2.50, edited by White Abbott, is not to be published until April 1. It's not a book for the young but a collection of seventy stories — fictioned and true — of childhood reminiscences and experiences.

My wife has read it and finds



REV. PETER M. DUNNE, S.J., chairman of History Department at San Francisco, and Latin America expert, is author of *A Pedro Vives South American*, just published.

It can be recommended, but that it is for grownups.

Lin Yutang's *The Vigil of A Nation*, \$2.75, is mentioned because there is continuing interest in China — including even the study of the language.

Dr. Lin writes attractively. His defense of Chiang Kai Shek's government — as opposed to the obstructive Communists — is notable. His tendency to disparage Christianity is still in evidence.

Personal Memoirs Mygatt, \$1.50, by Father Mygatt, Ph.D., and M.D., is highly recommended.

Lest by Father Popke, O.P., \$4.00, will aid the laity, as well as Priests and Religious, to profit from the professional scenes.

Those interested in literature, and particularly in literary criticism, should get some information, and possibly some amusement, from *Writings And Their Critics*, \$2.00, by the Barbizon doctor, as letters Henri Puy, now head of French at Yale.

Little love is lost between writers and critics, and criticism, says the author, is one of the most imperfect of man's intellectual activities. There are plenty of cases where supposedly great critics have been as completely wrong in their views as were the observers at a Paris salon who were called upon to appraise a painting named *Sunset Over The Adriatic*. The gullible critics did not know that the splashes of color had been applied by a donkey. Jockeys had tied paint brushes to the tail of the donkey which was then backed up to the canvas and allowed to create the masterpiece by the simple process of scratching his tail.

This book will reward the widely-read. I don't recommend it to others.

F. Conway Address Reported by Congress

Washington — (UPI) — An address entitled, "The Big Business of Being Poor," prepared by Father F. A. Conway, S.J., of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, has been inserted in the Congressional Record by Senator James H. Murray (D.Mont.), who served it a "very nice address."

In his speech, Father Conway stressed that in its latest report, the Catholic Association for International Peaces gave special emphasis on poverty which the Church desired to prevent starvation, and to point out that the Church said:

"There is no excuse for poverty when there is no poverty in the world. There is no excuse for poverty when there is no poverty in the world."

He added that the Church desired to do all it could to prevent poverty in the world, pointing out that the Church said:

"There is no excuse for poverty when there is no poverty in the world."

Protective Captain Reports

Prison's Death - Death

John J. Murphy, Protective Captain of the State Prison here, reported yesterday that the death of a Negro inmate, John W. Walker, 21, was due to a heart attack. Walker had been serving a life sentence for the killing of a white woman, Mrs. Mary E. Walker, in 1937.

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Author Wants Memories of 'AI'

Cyril Clemens, president of the International Mark Twain Society, informed the Catholic Courier this week that he is writing a book on Alfred E. Smith, former Governor of New York State.

Readers of this paper are requested to send their personal recollections of the late New York Governor to Mr. Clemens whose address is Webster Avenue, Massapequa.

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