

# Belles lettres and bell ringers

*The Case of the Unconquered Sisters*, by Todd Downing, '24as, '26 M.A., Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., Garden City. \$2.

THE body of the strange little English scholar is discovered in a plaster of paris cast along with a shipment of rare old Mexican mummies dug up by an anthropology party and sent back to a United States museum.

Todd Downing, who learned considerable about strange little English scholars and anthropology and Phi Beta Kappa keys while he was a student for four years and a faculty member for ten years at the University of Oklahoma, loses no time in putting his man, Hugh Rennert, to work on his fifth and most baffling of Downing murder mysteries.

The group of suspects includes two maiden ladies of southern tradition who, as the title indicates, remain unconquered by modernism and the spirit of General Grant; three members of an anthropology party who are living at the country home of the unconquered pair near Mexico City; an American assistant in the Consular service; a charming niece of the two good women; and a suave Mexican inspector of excavations.

Tecolotes, harbingers of death, hoot at night across the barren wastes of the lava covered pedregal as Hugh Rennert jumps from suspect to suspect unwinding the tangled thread of mystery.

A Phi Beta Kappa key, thought by Mexicans to be an ancient coin with knobs on the ends, is the eventual clue by which the murderer is tracked down; not however until one of the most promising suspects falls under the blow of a pick axe.

*The Case of the Unconquered Sisters* is Mr. Downing's fourth consecutive blood and thunder opus which bears the stamp of the Crime Club. The author, now practicing his penmanship at Atoka, has a straight novel and another murder-mystery on the way.—Ernie Hill.

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*A Rider of the Cherokee Strip* by Evan G. Barnard. Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston, 1936. \$2.50.

Books about Oklahoma and its early days have been very interesting indeed. But few can rival this one by an old cowboy of the Cherokee Strip.

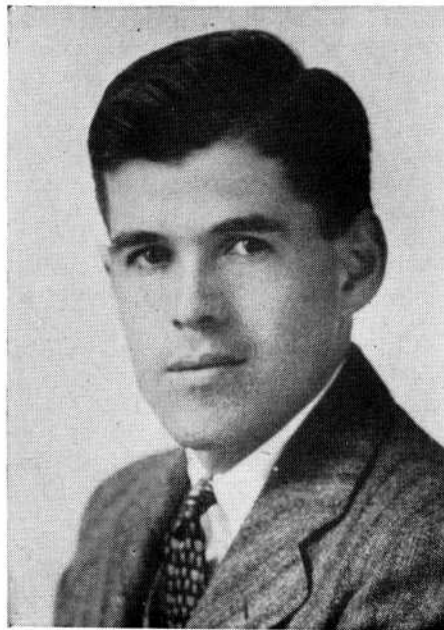
The book is prefaced by a signed "Endorsement of Authenticity" from the pen of Colonel Zack T. Miller, of the 101

Ranch. The book was put in form for the press by Dr. Edward Everett Dale, head of the department of history at the University. With such backers and collaborators, the author, Evan G. "Parson" Barnard, has produced an outstanding volume of memories.

Barnard began at the age of seventeen on a ranch in Texas, and afterward rode for various irons in Indian Territory, Oklahoma Territory, Kansas, and the Strip. His account of the life in those regions in early days is one of the best and most convincing we have seen. What is more, it is amusing and readable. Sometimes we thrill, sometimes we laugh, but we are always interested.

From an historical point of view, the best thing in Barnard's book is his explanation of just how and why the Indians, the rustlers, the soldiers, the cowmen, and the U.S. Marshals got along together. He presents a story that gives insight into a little understood state of society. Boomers and Sooners also figure here amusingly. And owing to Barnard's care, we come to know just what the life of a cowboy was like.

Bad men appear in these pages, but the picture one gets is very different from that presented by the usual Western adventure story in the magazines. We find no dudes, no cow-girls, no two-gun men here. Facts abound, and we learn how the early cowmen faced them. And we also find that the Indian was pretty well liked by the frontiersmen.



The funniest passages in the book are those which tell how the dispossessed cowboy tried to settle down and make a living in a changed world, after the Territory was thrown open to white settlement. The cowboy had to become a farmer, and his blundering efforts are amusing to contemplate. The nesters were suspicious and dangerous neighbors, hating and distrusting the cowboys—who had enough to do learning how to raise chickens, milk cows, and plow, without dodging the bullets of irate settlers.

Everyone who cares for Oklahoma history, the cattle industry, or a good book, will read this one.—Stanley Vestal.

## Scribbling Sooners

Dr. Roy Temple House, erudite head of the modern languages department, had an article on "The Technic of Sleeping" in the October number of *Hygeia* . . . . Todd Downing contributed a detective novelette to the Chicago Tribune recently . . . . Jack Stinnett, '23ex, is now a member of the New York staff of the Associated Press and writes a column entitled "In New York" . . . .

The Scripps-Howard newspaper chain purchased a series of short articles on *Popular Economic Fallacies* by V. G. Wilhite, '21as, assistant professor of economics . . . . Dean A. B. Adams' latest book *Analysis of Business Cycles*, will be released in November by the McGraw-Hill Book company of New York. It will replace an earlier book on business cycles written by Dr. Adams . . . .

The September issue of the *Southwestern Social Science Quarterly*, edited by Dr. J. J. Rhyne, director of the school of social work, contained articles by two faculty members—Dr. Royden J. Dangerfield and Dr. John B. Ewing. Dangerfield wrote on "Voter Motivation in the Recent Oklahoma Democratic Primary" and Ewing's article was on "Quest for Security."

John Alley, '02as, (Kingfisher college), head of the government department, wrote a full-page Sunday feature story which appeared in the *Daily Oklahoman* for October 4. The article, "First Aid on Hill 255," compared the automobile carnage of today with his first aid experience in war times . . . . Manuscripts for two new volumes in the grade-school language series, "My Own Language," by Dr. Chester O. Newlun, professor of school supervision in the University, and Lucy M. Meacham, of Wichita, Kans., have been sent to the publishers, Doubleday, Doran and company.

Todd Downing, '24as, '28 M.A., who scored again on his latest book, is in Atoka now, finishing work on another. He is rapidly establishing himself as a first-rank producer of mystery novels.