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## Belles lettres and bell ringers

*The Persian Journey of the Reverend Ashley Wishard and His Servant Fathi*, by Elgin Groseclose, '20as, Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill. \$2.50.

**E**AST is East and West is West" but sometimes at least the twain do meet. Ashley Wishard, medical missionary to Persia, backed by all the money necessary, with a magnificent physical plant for his mission, trained by all that the best of American universities had to offer, with all the mechanical resources of Western civilization behind him, decided to visit for himself the field in which he was to work for his Master. His high-powered automobile broke down and was exchanged for a three-horse carriage of uncertain vintage. The driver of the carriage got drunk on opium, wrecked the carriage, killed himself, and left Ashley and Fathi, his Moslem servant, helpless in the hands of Kurdish brigands. Ashley was able to save the life of the outlaw chieftain's son, and thereby to earn the right to preach Christ to the wild tribesmen.

That is the plot; but this is not a novel of plot. It is the story of a man's search for the meaning of life. Ashley Wishard came to drop, one by one, his preconceived notions of the functions of Christianity. He learned to know God, not in terms of hospitals, schools, magnificent cathedrals, and the amelioration of disease and poverty, but in the words of his Moslem servant, "by leaving the gates of the soul ajar."

He found out something of the tremendous underlying meaning, the sadness, the fanaticism, the single-mindedness, and the austerity of Mohammedanism; and he found good in it. He learned that there is a satisfaction in renunciation which is unknown to attainment; he found that, unable to heal lepers, or to do anything to alleviate their misery in the short time at his disposal, he was still able to bring them something which they prized still more than health or comfort.

He found a charity and a hospitality among the Persians and the mongrel strains of the East which he could not have found in the enlightened West. And above all, he found that, instead of being a teacher, he had become to a far greater extent, a learner, and that by stripping off the accoutrements of civilization, he had found God.

For the rest, a vivid travel book, writ-

ten with all the imagery and grace of the Persian poets (Dr. Groseclose, '20as, lived in Persia for three years after which he went to Armenia, where he fell afoul of the Soviets and got himself thrown into the secret prison for political offenders; he is now on leave of absence from the faculty of the College of Business Administration at O. U. acting as assistant chief economist for the Federal Communication Commission); a fine tale of adventure, and a comforting, guiding essay in the philosophy of life.

The book has been compared to Thornton Wilder's "The Bridge of San Luis Rey," to Yeats-Brown's "Lives of a Bengal Lancer," and to other philosophical-mystical excursions into the relation of man to the universe. As a matter of fact it stands alone, a thoughtful and thought-provoking book, one which most Americans could profit by.—KENNETH C. KAUFMAN.



## Sooners in anthology

Poems by nearly a dozen Sooner graduates and former students are included in the second volume of *Anthology of Poetry by Oklahoma Writers*, recently published by Aletha C. Conner, Oklahoma City.

Sooners included in the book, and the titles of their poems, are as follows: Clem Craven, '34as, Tulsa, *I Walk With Death*; Edgar Dallas, '06ex, Hammon, *Ship's Pilot*; Margaret Ross Thompson, '36fa, Oklahoma City, *Autumn Leaves*; Adeline B. Hill, '31ex, Chandler, *Rain and My Home*; Johnathon Roosevelt Johns, '26ex, Oklahoma City, *Tomorrow and Think*; Don Moon, '18ex, Guthrie, *The Great Race*; Agnes Gail McClelland, '29ex, Oklahoma City, *The Drouth*; Glen Shelton, '36ex, Altus, *The Last Chieftain*; Etalea Unferth, '35ex, Oklahoma City, *Pencil Etchings*; and Emma Lou Walker, '34ex, Waurika, *Romance* and *To My Grandmother*.

It would be unreasonable to expect the workmanship on the poems in this anthology of Oklahoma writers to measure up to the standards of the nation's best poets. There are amateur touches, but the sincerity and the Oklahoma subject matter in many of the poems helps to offset the occasional lack of polish.

Some of the selections in this anthology are finely done and probably will prove of enduring worth. Don Moon's *The Great Race* is especially good, catching the drama of the '89 run in a simple but effective manner.