

Belles lettres and bell ringers

Mountain Men, by Stanley Vestal.
Houghton-Mifflin, 1937. \$3.00.

STANLEY VESTAL has climaxed a long series of books on Indian subjects with a volume that is a grand story of adventure, and at the same time tells vividly an epic chapter of American history that has previously attracted little general attention.

The book is the story of the free trappers of the early days in the Rocky Mountains, the period when the rage for beaver hats made trapping a highly profitable occupation.

These trappers for the most part had heroic qualities—they had to be courageous, skillful in use of their hands, ingenious in outwitting their enemies, in order to exist at all.

America has long called itself the land of the free, but these rugged trappers of the Rocky Mountains were the freest of the free. Beyond the frontier, frequently in the domain of hostile Indians, they had no protection from the forces of law and order except an occasional army expedition. And soldiers often only made things worse because they infuriated the Indians and did little to protect the isolated trappers scattered out on mountain streams.

Mountain Men is full of adventure and excitement. It is the story of trappers against the Indians, trappers against wild animals, trappers against the heavy snows and the drouths, and at times trappers against each other.

It was truly a case of survival of the fittest, and the trappers who escaped scalping very long and who became recognized leaders among others of their kind were truly men representing a high degree of manhood.

The book is scholarly in the sense that it is well documented, and plainly shows the work of a vast amount of research, but in the reading it is not scholarly—it is absorbing adventure.

Mr. Vestal's rare understanding of the Indian viewpoint, as well as that of the trappers, gives the book a balance that adds considerably to its clarity.

He is known to many generations of University students as W. S. Campbell, and his courses in literary criticism have been popular among discerning students. He has been on the University faculty

since 1915 with the exception of a period from 1917 to 1919 when he was captain of field artillery in the U. S. army and saw active service in France.

His first book was *Fandango, Ballads of the Old West*, published in 1927. Some of his other best known works are *Early Days Among the Cheyenne & Arapahoe Indians* which he edited from the papers of John H. Seger, *Kit Carson: Warrior of the Old West, Sitting Bull: Champion of the Sioux, Warpath, New Sources of Indian History*, and *Dobe Walls*.

He has written numerous short stories for magazines, and his text on creative writing is to be published soon by the MacMillan company.

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Lakme, Opera in Three Acts,
English text by Spencer Norton and
Helene Carpenter. University of Ok-
lahoma Press, 1937. Fifty cents.

The third in a series of English translations of standard operas was issued by the University of Oklahoma Press in April.

The new book is a translation of the opera "Lakme," by Edmond Gondinet and Phillippe Gille, and as in the case of the previous two numbers in the series, the English text was done by Spencer Norton, head of the University Operatic Association, and Helene Carpenter, Norman.

The University Press is carrying out a two-fold purpose in printing these English texts. One objective is to provide an authentic English text that will enable audiences to enjoy and appreciate opera to a great extent. Another purpose is to facilitate the production of opera by school and other non-professional groups.

Decision to start the series was reached when it was found that good translations of standard operas were surprisingly scarce. The substantial sale of the new English texts has indicated that a real need is being met.

The first two translations published by the Press were of "Carmen" and "Rigoletto."

Because of the musical and literary ability of the translators, the English texts have been complimented highly for their pleasing style and for their adaptability to vocalization.

The translation of "Lakme" was given a practical test in its presentation by the University Operatic Association in May and many critics called it excellent.

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Public Relations by Louis Lefko. Dorrance and Company, Philadelphia. \$2.00.

When this reviewer was a Tulsa newspaperman, Louie Lefko was fearlessly exposing various frauds designed to get the unsuspecting public's money. It was amazing how many schemes were afoot in those days of easy money, easy to get and easy to lose, to rob the public. Most of the schemes were hard to expose but the head of the Better Business Bureau sooner or later got to the heart of the fraud.

Now Mr. Lefko has turned to the novel. And a good novel it is, of a public relations man of a big utility company, amassing a fortune on quick tips of new utility issues, protecting his company against legislative scrutiny, and trying to win the girl he loves, only to lose her when his conscience has become insensitive to the finer instincts in the lust for money.

Tom Brent turns from the newspaper with its many contacts to become contact man for a utility holding company. His big job is to prevent the state legislature from "cracking down" on his company. Standing in his way is Jack Henry, a legislator with senatorial aspirations, a man apparently incorruptible. Brent discovers that he has one weakness, beautiful women. It proves relatively easy, by employing a beautiful girl, Lorraine Morton, to trap Henry. But that success proves Brent's failure. Hollywood calls her. There the public relations man finds that Henry, loser in the legislature, is winner in love, simply because Brent's sense of values has been blunted by easy money.

The novel is a frank attack on the practice of some large corporations, especially utilities, maintaining not only expensive public relations men but lobbies designed to prevent successful regulation on the part of the public. It is a stimulating, vigorous and courageous novel.—J. A. B.

The early days with Dr. Boyd

BY ROBERT B. KEENAN, '15

THE recent passing of Dr. David Ross Boyd reminds us of the early days of Oklahoma University.

I visited him frequently at his home in Glendale during his last years. Until the end, his mind was clear and active. His heart was always with the University. He was interested in every detail of its development. He loved to recount his early experiences with Territorial legislatures and educators of his day.

His was not an easy task. He had to do a lot of things without money. He had to plan the foundations of a great institution of learning which would meet the requirements of a great metropolitan state, to be built in the future. Only a few pioneers could visualize the enormous development that would come with the advent of statehood—he was one of them. He had to build a plant that could be expanded to meet the enormous demand that must come with the development of big cities in this new state. Of course he was interested in the realization of a vision that he had years ago. This was his life's work. As he looked back on those years of constant struggle he rejoiced that the job was done as well as it was.

Those of us who were on the campus during the first year of statehood remember how crude things were. One of the three buildings (the Administration

building) was destroyed by fire about Christmas time. The old Science building had been condemned by the architects. There was no money to rebuild it, so it was braced in any manner to make it stand. The old Carnegie library was the only building on the campus.

After the fire, wooden shacks were built to house classes temporarily. When the wintry winds began to blow, it was an advantage to attend class early and grab a seat near the radiator. I had the misfortune to attend classes there until the new Administration building was completed, then I went over to the law school which was then holding forth in the basement of the Carnegie Library building. After a heavy rain we had to wade in.

When the new law building was completed I finished. I am not regretting this plight. Notwithstanding these discomforts we all had the same brand of learning you are getting today. Professors, who have become outstanding in their respective lines were there then. They were an ambitious, hard-working lot, who knew how to meet these obstacles. They turned out alumni that must soon take over the reins of government. With the years, Oklahoma has provided new and beautiful buildings, and expanded facilities until it has a great university.