

Oklahoma Books

TODD DOWNING'S mystery novels to date have had their settings in Mexico; but his latest, *Death Under the Moonflower*, has moved over the Rio Grande and into one of the border counties in South Texas. Here he has laid out a story of unusual suspense and highly intricate complication. It's a story singularly devoid of sympathetic characters. You suspect practically all of them of some crime or others, and most of those that aren't suspected, you can't like. They're pretty unpleasant specimens of the more or less human race.

The sheriff of Hesperides County, one Peter Bounty by name, is an outstanding exception to the general vileness. Here is a sleuth after our own heart! Here is none of your smart-alec young amateur nor your sly and infallible Latins or Orientals, but a pretty ordinary American sheriff with nothing in particular to equip him to deal with the situations in which he suddenly becomes involved. He even admits his own inadequacy! And he even makes some mistakes; but somehow he inspires your confidence, and, needless to say, he comes through in fine style.

The story has unusual detail. It centers around a character who never appears—the son of a sort of "Border Baron"—who has streptococcus viridans and must have blood transfusions from someone who has recently recovered from the disease and whose blood matches his own rare blood type.

As the few available donors turn up, they are murdered mysteriously—right under the sheriff's nose—indeed while in his custody and always to the accompaniment of the overpowering scent of the moonflower. There is a charming young

girl, cousin of one of the prospective donors, and a lean young deputy with the results as anticipated.

There are many doctors on the scene, and they, like most of Mr. Downing's characters, are flesh and blood, for the author has a knack of character drawing that is quite satisfying. Somehow you can rarely forget one of his people. Each one moves and speaks in his own idiom, and you never find yourself leafing back through the pages, wondering vaguely, "Who is this guy, now, and where have we met him before?" There is always as much excitement to be found in these vivid portrayals as there is in the story itself. Mr. Downing never lets even the most unimportant character in his story pass without some significant detail being added that makes of him a rounded personality.

The solution of the mystery of the multiple deaths is ingenious and unexpected. And, of course, a suitable blood donor is found at the very last moment.

Downing fans will enjoy Sheriff Peter Bounty and *Death Under the Moonflower*, and will look forward to further adventures of this new hero. But many of us will also eagerly await more stories in the excellent Mexican Series. Mr. Downing's intimate knowledge of Mexico, gained from long periods spent in that fascinating country, gives his Mexican mysteries a flavor and color that are very satisfying to the seeker after the rare and unusual in such tales.—HOMER HECK.

Writing taught by mail

Quite a number of Oklahoma club women, teachers, professional women, housewives and business men who never before thought of taking a correspondence course are showing an interest in a new course recently offered for the first time through the University of Oklahoma Extension Division. This new course is a correspondence version of the course in professional writing that was started as a regular residence course during the first semester of the present school year by W. S. Campbell, professor of English.

Although the University makes no provision for a personal conference with correspondence students, Mr. Campbell has decided to grant this privilege to everyone who satisfactorily completes 161-A, the correspondence course in professional writing, and decides to continue by taking English 161-B, which is a more advanced course in professional writing.

The fee for 161-A is \$20 and that for 161-B is \$30. The charge is double the usual fee for correspondence courses because of the special attention to be given students by the instructor.

Books for

Oil Men and Engineers

1

Petroleum Production

by Wilbur F. Cloud, professor of petroleum engineering in the University of Oklahoma. A comprehensive book covering the entire subject of production and development, for engineers and operators. It deals particularly with sand conditions, reservoir energies, prevention of waste, increasing ultimate production, and improving economy of production practices. Widely used in technical schools and by major oil companies. Published by the University of Oklahoma Press.

\$5.00

2

Petroleum in the United States and Possessions

by Ralph Arnold and William J. Kemnitzer. An exhaustive survey of geology, technology and economics of petroleum in the United States and its possessions. The book presents and interprets data on the petroleum industry from its beginning to the present time. A book valuable to geologists, engineers, economists, bankers and investors. Published by Harper and Brothers.

\$2.95

(Originally \$16.00)

3

Stabilization of the Petroleum Industry

by Leonard Logan, now director of short courses at the University of Oklahoma. A thorough-going discussion of the economic problems of the petroleum industry. Published by the University of Oklahoma Press.

\$2.25

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