



The Charcoal Dance (*Médecine du charbon*)

## Oklahoma Books and Writers

*Tixier's Travels on the Osage Prairies*, edited by John Francis McDermott, translated from the French by Albert J. Salvan. University of Oklahoma Press, 1940. \$3.00.

A remarkably vivid description of life among the Osage Indians a hundred years ago is presented in this new book from the University of Oklahoma Press. *Tixier's Travels on the Osage Prairies* is Volume IV of the American Exploration and Travel Series recently announced as a development of the University Press program of regional publication. The Press has won an important place in the literary world with its Civilization of the American Indian Series, which now numbers nineteen volumes, and the new exploration series seems likely to become equally interesting and valuable.

In this new series the Press plans to present a thorough going picture of the processes of American exploration and settlement, giving attention also to movements which continue into the present.

Victor Tixier was a young French medical student who while convalescing from an injury, decided to make a voyage to America. His account of his travels, first published in 1844 in a small edition, became one of the rarest pieces of Western Americana. University Press now offers it in translation for the first time.

Tixier devotes part of his book to New Orleans and the Lower Mississippi, but most of it relates his adventures while visiting the Osage tribe in "Nion-Chou"—the Neosho region of what is now northeastern Oklahoma.

Tixier presents a full and satisfying account of all the things he saw: the Indian chiefs, and other interesting characters, the things they used for food, the kind of places in which they lived, their costumes, their customs, their social conventions, their ceremonies, the weapons they used, the kind of country in which they lived, their war-time philosophy, and every detail of Indian life as seen by a Frenchman viewing it for the first time.

The freshness and spontaneity of this first-hand description of Osage Indian life is in favorable contrast to the more scholarly descriptions written in later years by authors who had to depend upon second-hand information. Tixier, however, was enough of a student himself to tell his story in considerable detail, even quoting the Indian names for many of the things he tells about.

His narrative is distinguished by his ability to take a deep interest in everything he saw while at the same time maintaining a detached viewpoint that made it possible for him to tell his story without emotional bias either for or against the Indians. For a man who apparently had been raised in a cultivated environment in France, he managed to display a remarkable tolerance toward some of the crudities of life in an Osage lodge.

Tixier was something of an artist as well as a medical student and five of the illustrations in *Travels on the Osage Prairies* are drawings of Indian subjects by the author himself. These drawings are surprisingly in harmony with the native Indian style of art work.

John Francis McDermott, the editor, is assistant professor of English in Washington University, St. Louis, and is a frequent contributor to historical and scholarly journals. Albert J. Salvan, the translator, is a native of France with degrees from the Sorbonne and is now instructor of French in Brown University.

Previous volumes in the University Press's American Exploration and Travel Series are *Adventure on Red River* by Captain Randolph B. Marcy and Captain G. B. McClellan, edited by Grant Foreman; *Marcy and the Gold Seekers*, edited by Grant Foreman; and *Tabeau's Narrative of Loisel's Expedition to the Upper Mississippi*, edited by Annie Helouise Abel and translated by Rose Abel Wright.

### The Profit System

*Bread or Lead—Production for Use or Production for Destruction*, by Oscar Ameringer. Co-operative Books, Norman, 1940. Fifty cents.

Number 9 in Series I of the Co-operative Books pamphlet series consists of selections reprinted from the pages of the *American Guardian*, a weekly labor newspaper published in Oklahoma City and nationally circulated.

*Bread or Lead* consists chiefly of attacks on industry's exploitation of workers. Mr. Ameringer argues that the age of scarcity is dead—but that the soul of the age of scarcity still dominates the owners of industry.

The Co-operative Books series is edited by Winifred Johnston Perry, '24, of Norman.