

# New Books

## from sooners and the university of oklahoma press

**LAST WITNESS FOR ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON** by Elsie Noble Caldwell  
University of Oklahoma Press

The often repeated tale of *Treasure Island's* colorful author living out the remaining years of a precarious existence on his own South Sea paradise is as fascinating as the yarns he so masterfully wove into the literary tradition of the generations who have followed him. Yet the rumors and gossip about the private life of Robert Louis Stevenson have at times merged fact and fiction to reach legendary proportions—and in the eyes of his devotees, maligned the character of the man.

When Stevenson's stepdaughter, the late Isobel Osbourne Field, contacted Elsie Caldwell, it was to set to right misconceptions about her mother, Fanny Osbourne, and "the finest man I ever knew." Certainly this volume justifies Mrs. Field's selection of a spokesman.

Author Caldwell has presented a well written, entertaining account of the brilliant semi-invalid Stevenson and Fanny, whose only reason for living became the arduous task of keeping her husband alive. Their struggles for health, happiness and security in Europe, in San Francisco and finally on the voyage to Hawaii and at home in Samoa are related with the enthusiasm and understanding of one who knew, loved and admired these people, if only through the recollections of their "last witness."

—CJR

**A LADY'S LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS** by Isabella L. Bird, introduction by Daniel J. Boorstin  
University of Oklahoma Press

A lady's life in the Rocky Mountains is the same today as it would be almost any place else on the continent, but in 1873 a woman alone on horseback visiting the peaks was a rare event. And when the woman happened to be a middle-aged English woman on her way back to the British Isles from the Pacific islands, the situation became even more interesting.

This volume is a collection of letters written by Isabella L. Bird to her sister reflecting the hardship of travel, the nature of the Westerners she met and the glories of the Colorado scene.

A vivid travelogue, an artistic description of nature and its creatures, an understanding portrayal of the mountain citizen—these are the rewards of *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*.

—PJF

**RED MEN IN BLUE** by Ray Tassin  
Avalon Books

This first novel by Ray Tassin, '50journ, '57ma, who teaches journalism at Baylor University, follows a mild yet current fad for Indians in uniform, only this time the Civil War is over and Tassin's Indians fight other Indians instead of Confederates.

The hero is a white cavalry captain reared by the Pawnees, despised by fellow officers, rejected by the daughter of the colonel he supposedly betrayed, loved by an Indian girl. There are two villains, one white, one red, and a semi-villain, who is white. The hero repulses renegade raids, ambushes Indians, rescues kidnaped women and children and wins the colonel's daughter—and in the midst of it all, makes possible the completion of the Union Pacific.

—CJR

**ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PHILOSOPHY** by G. W. F. Hegel, translated and annotated by Gustav E. Mueller  
Philosophical Library

It is scarcely more than a pardonable exaggeration to say (slightly adapting A. N. Whitehead's remark about Plato) that 19th and 20th century philosophy consists largely of a series of footnotes to Hegel. Absolute idealists, Marxists, existentialists, phenomenologists, historians, even pragmatists—all have felt the impact of this powerful thinker.

Nevertheless, it has been fashionable for the past 50 or 60 years to regard Hegel as being either (1) hopelessly muddled and not deserving of philosophical respectability, or (2) very suggestive at times, but largely unintelligible.

The cause lies, to a great extent, in Hegel's own turbid, involved style. Dr. Mueller, who is research professor of philosophy at O.U., observes in his "Translator's Note": To translate the world's worst stylist literally, sentence by sentence, is possible—it has been done—but it is perfectly pointless; the translation, then, is every bit as unintelligible as the original.

Dr. Mueller has less translated than recast the thought of the *Encyclopedia*, excising what he takes to be superfluous and/or invincibly obscure. The result is worthwhile. It should not, of course, be inferred that we now have a *Hegel for Children*. Hegel is not to be had, even with competent assistance, save by labor.

—KRM

**WOODROW WILSON AT PRINCETON** by Hardin Craig  
University of Oklahoma Press

In dealing with this neglected side of Woodrow Wilson's life, Author Craig sets forth a good case for the belief that his career as an educator would have given Wilson a place in history even if fate had not led him to the White House. The Princeton president is pictured as a man believing in learning rather than teaching, that America's formalized education hinders intellectual development, that training political leaders is the chief function of the university.

Craig, who taught under Wilson at Princeton, relies on his first hand knowledge of his mentor not only to record Wilson's educational concepts but to interpret them. It is inevitable that in the interpretation can be found nearly as much Craig as Wilson.

—CJR