

\$1,355 RECEIVED IN COURT FINES

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A total of \$1,355 was collected in fines and costs by Justice Floyd S. Buck during the month of March, from 19 firms and individuals.

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BOOK REVIEWS

By SALLY KNOX
AN ARMY WITHOUT BANNERS, by J. Beams; Little, Brown and Co. publishers.

Since everyone who hears this title wonders what an army without banners might be, and since this is not a mystery story, we might explain that "The Army Without Banners" in Mr. Beams' book is composed of those sturdy and fearless pioneers, who, disdaining the soft life of the East, kept up a steady trek to the West, and eventually peopled the great Canadian Northwest.

Sturdy and fearless, though these people were, Mr. Beams did not endow the Canadian pioneers with heroism. They went West because it was in their blood; because they liked comparative solitude and independence. The discomforts of pioneer life, they endured as a matter of course. They did not expect to be comfortable, and one of their neighbors who made a definite attempt to introduce comfort into his home was regarded with surprise by the others.

Billy and his wife, Maggie, were trail blazers. They went in wagons to regions far from civilization, and their claim, and built their home. Nat longed for them, however, because a few weeks later, an Englishman and his family settled near them. Others arrived to take up homesteads in the region. Soon they had a little settlement. Billy became dissatisfied and wanted to move on again; but his wife prevented him. "The trouble with this place," he would say again and again, "is too many damn neighbors." Finally after the year had passed and the children had grown, she found he was no longer to be held, and agreed to go westward once more with him, selling the property, and tearing her heartstrings with the connections she must break.

The book is well written and contains some excellent character depiction. Its subject matter is comparatively virgin material, for although our own pioneers have received tribute in song and story, the Canadian pioneers, whose life and problems were somewhat different, have not received so much attention. On one point we advise the reader: keep near a radiator or a fire place, as the temperature in this book hovers usually between 30 and 60 degrees below zero. Michigan winters, even the one we have just passed through, sink in to insignificance when compared with those of the Canadian northwest, where horses and men freeze in their tracks if they stand still.

Mr. Beams has done a fine piece of work, and made a worthwhile contribution to our library of Americana. At the same time, he has written an entertaining book, which will delight many who re-

ceive pleasure from the simple humor of the common people.

UNCLE SAM by John Erskine, The Bobbs-Merrill Co. publishers.

When John Erskine's "The Private Life of Helen of Troy" first made its public bow about four years ago, and instantly took its place in the select fraternity of best sellers, the author was widely acclaimed for the unconventional-ity of his views, the delightful informality with which he treated historical figures, and above all, for the originality and freshness of his style. When "Galash" appeared, the public renewed with a pleasure somewhat lessened, by familiarity, its acquaintance with the witty results of Professor Erskine's sallies into the dusty pages of history. Succeeding books and magazine articles brought forth within the next few years contained again the same philosophy, the same style, and, in general, the same subject matter.

Mr. Erskine's reputation for originality began to decline; people began to think that a mind which ran always on the same track must be a one-track mind. They began to say he had one idea, which was a good one, but it had already been overexploited. They believed that an original mind would continue to produce original ideas; and that since Mr. Erskine's did not, therefore it must be not original, but merely different; and they conceded that he had certainly made the most, commercially out of his one idea.

In Uncle Sam, a definite attempt to get away from the sort of thing that has been monopolizing the author's attention for the past four years seems to have been made. Instead of a far from original, but one-track mind, character, a figure very close and dear to the hearts of all Americans was chosen for the central character. Uncle Sam for the first time, proudly steps out of cartoon and enters fiction. Mr. Erskine tried sincerely to write objectively of the national character, and to translate into one man's life the outstanding phases of the nation's. At the same time, he presents to the members of Sam's family, the European nations, personified respectively by Antoinette, John, Frederick, and Orlando. These characters and their wives and children are real people; they are true to the nation they represent, and in the incidents of their lives historical events are recognizable.

Events of his childhood are related, and we are told how he breaks away in early manhood from the economic tyranny of his brother John, and, with the aid of money loaned by his sister Antoinette, starts out in business for himself, and after a period of hardship, becomes immensely prosperous so that his brothers come to him for financial aid. The moral problems faced by the younger generation are dwelled on at some length, with the never failing and familiar Erskine lightness of touch.

Mr. Erskine was serious in writing this book. According to the publishers' blurb, he had been considering the subject for at least 13 years. As a matter of fact, he was quite right, the conception was excellent, it is with the execution of it that we must find fault. But as the book started out to be something different it must be accounted something of a failure. Erskine has only added another to a series of books which ought to have been curtailed long ago, although some of them alone might have been outstanding, for they are all extremely clever, and different from what anyone else has done. The trouble is, they are too different for an oft-repeated diet. We can eat potatoes everyday and still like them; while a daily consumption of artichokes or sweetbreads is not to be recommended. If Mr. Erskine had had the ability or the will to carry out his original purpose, or who seemed to be his original purpose, he might have become the author of that much-heralded book, "The Great American Novel."

A fire engine was the bridal car that carried James Tierney and his bride from their wedding to the station in Des Moines, Ill.

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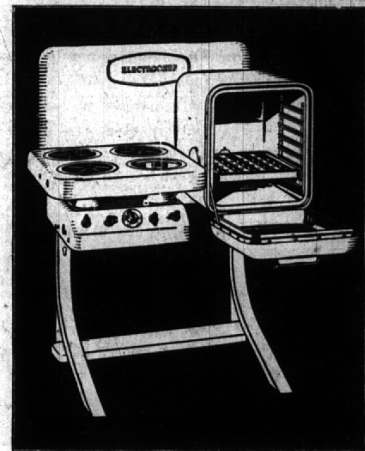
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