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BOOKS AND BOOKMEN

LIFE FROM THE BAR-TENDER'S ANGLE.

"Jimmie's" Customers in Paris.

*This Must be the Place.* By James Charters. Herbert Joseph, Ltd., 12/6.

It was, if memory serves aright, that master of the short story, O. Henry, who once wrote a tale concerning a waitress to whom all mankind appeared simply in the guise of eaters. In the same way to the railway guard men must seem just travellers. Yet the ordinary man spends a comparatively small part of his existence in either eating or travelling. He is a man first and an eater and a traveller second.

These reflections are provoked by one of the most curious and at the same time most readable books of reminiscences that have been published for many months. "This Must be the Place," subtitled *Memoirs of Montparnasse*. Its author is Jimmie, one of the best-known bar tenders in Paris! In his day Jimmie, or to give him his full name, James Charters, has encountered practically every well-known personality in the literary and artistic world of Paris together with many more who, although they do not reside permanently in the city on the Seine, drop in there when the spirit moves them.

**Wine—and Wit.**

It would seem that, in nine cases out of ten, they drop in to the bar at which Jimmie, for the time being happens to be the white-coated *deus ex machina* and that on occasion, he has known the spirit to move them very potently! In fact he invented one cocktail that had such startling results that the owner of the particular establishment Jimmie was adorning at the time, reluctantly but firmly forbade its further concoction.

Its ingredients included Pernod, Picon, Mandarin, brandy and cherry Rocher, the whole diluted with soda water.

On the whole Jimmie has managed to steer clear of the temptation to look on mankind simply as imbibers of vast quantities of assorted liquors, although there are many anecdotes that certainly prove the truth of the old adage that "When the wine is in, the wit is out." In one place Jimmie observes "I wish I could write an uncensored book. It would be lots more fun."

If "This must be the place" is a censored book, heavens knows what an unexpurgated version of it would be like, for it would be highly indiscreet on the part of a reviewer to quote at least half of the most striking anecdotes that have passed the Censor, including the one which gives the book its title. A word that is permissible when recording the awards at a dog show is, in polite literature, taboo in any other contest!

To turn to another aspect of the book it is truly remarkable the number of really well-known characters Jimmie has viewed from the other side of the bar. They pass before us in a veritable post-war cavalcade. To mention but a few whose names are touched upon by this Pepys of Paris has known Isadora Duncan, Gordon Craig, Frank Harris, Epstein, Steve Donoghue, Nancy Cunard, Paul Poiret, the costumer, **Aleister Crowley**, the magician, Count Karolyi, Sutton Vane, Ernest Hemingway—who has written him an introduction to the book—Gertrude Stein, Mistinguett, Harpo Marx, Ferdinand Tuohy, Augustus John, Ford Madox Ford, and scores of others.

To quote a story or two. One deals with a man who had an answer to every question. Once, says Jimmie, when asked what he did for a living by some new arrival, he said he was a jockey. "But you're too heavy to be a jockey!" "Well, you see, I'm a jockey for elephants, and I'm just on my way to Delhi for the New Jersey Sweepstakes!"

Another is a Cockney anecdote. " 'Ere, give us two w'iskies for two lydies," said a woman entering a London public house. "Two lydies?" said the bartender, looking over the rail. "But I don't see but one o' you!" "That's right! That's right! The other lydy is rest'n in the gutter!"

—W.B.S.