

The New Books

WHAT'S AROUND THE CORNER?

O. Henry, the author; William Sydney Porter, the man—in spite of their identity two distinct personalities, developed thru two widely differing sets of experiences—were linked by one ruling passion, the quest of “What’s around the corner?” which furnished O. Henry with the theme of many stories and was Sydney Porter’s nearest approach to a vocation. From the “somnolent little Southern town” of Greensboro, North Carolina, where he was born and raised, to the Texas prairies and the cities of Austin and Houston, to Honduras and around the entire coast of South America, for over three years in the Ohio penitentiary at Columbus, and then to Pittsburgh O. Henry followed this quest, until around the last corner he came into the Mecca of his imaginings, New York, or as he whimsically rechristened it “Little Old Bagdad-on-the-Subway,” “The City of Chameleon Changes.”

The salient facts in that quest, hitherto hidden by the pseudonym “O. Henry” and by Mr. Porter’s desire to avoid anything like self-advertisement, have been admirably set forth by C. Alphonso Smith in his *O. Henry Biography*, which is pleasantly interspersed with the comments of the people who liked O. Henry and given the actual characteristics of one of the “American Kipling’s” own stories by the frequent quotation of his “best bits” and by the sympathetic appreciation of the chronicler.

Some one once asked O. Henry why he did not read more fiction. His answer might serve—if it were needed—as an incentive to read this biography. “It (fiction) is all tame,” he replied, “as compared with the romance of my own life.”

O. Henry Biography, by C. Alphonso Smith.
Doubleday, Page & Co. \$2.50.