

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

September 16, 1954

'Man Against Nature'

Harper & Bros., publishers of New York, have just sent us a copy of Charles Neider's tales of adventures and explorations entitled "Man Against Nature." The author has been on the Monterey Peninsula for several weeks working on the diary of Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson which is included in the valuable collection of Stevensoniana in the Stevenson House in Monterey.

Today we are chiefly interested in Charles Neider's work as an author. To date he has nine books to his credit – novels, anthologies, and edited collections of famous writers. His home address is New York but it seems he is seldom there for both he and his wife are world travelers – enjoying life as it comes, combining writing with pleasure.

According to the jacket information on Harper's edition of "Man Against Nature," Charles Neider's work was first published professionally at the age of 13 years in the Richmond Times Dispatch. Since then he has found time for extensive travel in Europe and America, for work on the New Yorker and the Office of War Information, for writing a novel, and, as his chief interest, the editing of successful anthologies in different fields. To compile "Man Against Nature" Mr. Neider spent hours combing the collections of the great libraries and the Explorers' Club of New York. Neider is a graduate of the College of New York City and is a native of Richmond, Va.

"Man Against Nature" is a story of adventure from whaling ships to Kon-Tiki, from Everest to ocean depths, from the Arctic to the Sahara.

"It is a giant book of true, eye-witness stories of the world's greatest explorers, pioneers and adventurers. Collected in the volume for the first time anywhere are the classic and gripping accounts of men like Lindbergh, Edmund Hillary, Thor Heyerdahl, Jim Corbett, men who conquered mountains, fought wild animals, killed whales, battled head hunters, braved arctic blizzards, - 47 extraordinary selections that contain all kinds of dangers and excitement."

The collection begins with the report of "Earthquake at San Francisco" as told by Frank W. Aitken and Edward Hilton. The story is told in dramatic detail by two persons who experienced it, with an opening comment

by Neider. Then there is the "Strange Death of Louis Slotkin" – a story of radiation, a deadly product of an atomic explosion; followed by "A Voyage to the South Pole" as told by Roald Amundsen; and an anonymous writer of the 18th century who wrote "The Just Vengeance of Heaven."

There are other such fascinating titles as: "Lost in the Sahara," "The Great Lisbon Earthquake," "The Champawat Man-Eater" by Jim Corbett; "Indians" by George A. Custer, of "Custer's Last Stand" fame; and "Rounding the Horn" by Richard Henry Dana as told in his "Two Years Before the Mast."

If a reader of this column has ever visited the whaling museum in Nantucket, we are sure a pause was made to dream dreams of battles with Leviathan, and that dream has been vitalized by William M. Davies in his "Battle With a Whale" which Neider has included in his "Man Against Nature." Another fascinating story for westerners is "Man Against Bronco" by Emerson Hough, who also wrote "The Covered Wagon," which was made into a movie in the twenties.

Those interested in aviation and the history of the airplane will be delighted with Charles A. Lindbergh's "New York to Paris." The story of a "Buffalo Chase" by Francis Parkman is another exciting story with a western setting, selected by Neider for repeating in his collection of stories of "Man Against Nature." "The North Pole Conquered" written by Robert E. Perry, would appeal to young and old alike.

Other selections included in the volume of 483 pages, priced at \$5, are: "Alone" by Richard E. Bird; "The Great Chicago Fire" by Samuel S. Greeley; Kon-Tiki by Thor Heyerdahl; "The Johnstown Flood" by Peter J. Toner; "Ten Thousand Miles in the Saddle" by A.F. Tschiffely and "Success of the Kitty Hawk" by Orville Wright, and many other such intriguing titles and authors.

"Man Against Nature" was published August 25th. On September 7th, "Men of High Calling" edited by Charles Neider was published by the Abingdon Press of New York and Nashville. Last February the Twayne Publishers released a novel by the same author, under the title "The White Citadel" and the same month Harpers published his novel "The Fabulous Insects." Neider has just finished a novel, the scene of which is set in Southern California, for which he has selected the title "The Frozen Sea." It will be published by the University Press at Oxford.

Early works edited by Charles Neider are: "Short Novels of the Masters" (1948), "Great Short Stories" (1950), and "Great Shipwrecks and Castaways"