belles lettres and bell ringers


By President W. B. Bizzell
In the Daily Oklahoman

This is the first volume of a new series of publications dealing with the folk lore of the southwest. This new publication is sponsored by the Oklahoma Folk-Lore Society and it is the first book printed by the University of Oklahoma Press. The talents of several artists and the skill of the printer have been combined to make this an unusually attractive volume.

The contents cover a surprisingly wide range of material from other sources. The lore naturally occupies a large place in this publication, it does not exclude a wide range of material from other sources. The high quality of the contents is assured by the names of the contributors, which include J. Frank Dobie, Lynn Riggs, Stanley Vestal and other well known writers and authorities in the field of southwestern folk-lore.

The introduction by B. A. Botkin, the editor, is a scholarly survey of the field to which he has added a discriminating bibliography. The range of material may be illustrated by "Choctaw Fables" by James Culberson, "The Taxi Talk" by George Milburn, and the poems entitled "People of the Backwater" by Lynn Riggs. This is not a volume of the general popular magazine type out of which one selects two or three articles that interest him and ignores the other contributions. It is a book that one may read through page to page finding something interesting in every paragraph throughout the volume.

The appearance of Folk Say is an event in the literary history of Oklahoma. Its contents constitute a contribution to comparative literature. It is surprising how rich our Southwestern country is in material of this kind, and the Oklahoma Folk-Lore society is to be congratulated on this literary enterprise. Under the able editorship of B. A. Botkin, George Milburn and J. Frank Dobie, and with the sympathetic cooperation of Joseph A. Brandt, the scholarly and efficient editor of the University of Oklahoma Press, Folk-Say should attract wide spread attention and contribute substantially to our knowledge of the material in this field.

By John McClure, '15
In the New Orleans Times-Picayune

The Oklahoma Folk-Lore Society, following the path of the Texas society, whose excellent miscellaneys have been reviewed at length on this page, has begun the publication of Folk-Say, a Regional Miscellany, edited by B. A. Botkin, which promises to be one of the most valuable repositories of folk-lore and criticism of folkways in America. Mr. Botkin, an excellent poet and critic and keen student of popular lore, has made a highly successful beginning in the first number of the series. Folk-Say deals primarily with the literature of the southwest but is concerned with any distinctlyly regional material, south, north, east or west. One of the most natural and convincing specimens in this number is "The Indiana Log-Rolling" as told by Cliff Frank to Mr. Botkin.

Folk-Say, too, includes more than simple folk-lore. The editor has included in this number and will include in others to follow new material in prose and verse of definitely regional tone. "Oklahoma Opera" by George Milburn, who spent last year in New Orleans and is a contributor to quarter is much the best work in the volume. These sketches of Oklahoma small town life resemble Sherwood Anderson's sketches in their simplicity, but are richer and more significant than any but Anderson's best. Milburn promises to do very fine work indeed.

Mr. Botkin who starts Folk-Say with an article on "The Folk in Literature: An Introduction to the New Regionalism", points out that both scholars and writers in America, after over a century of vague aspiration, for an "American Literature" conceived as some sort of generality, have awakened to the fact that good literature is primarily provincial. A new interest in regional traditions and culture has supplanted the old democratic abstractions.