

## DOOMSDAY BOOK

BY EDGAR LEE MASTERS. Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada.

A TRAPPER walking along the east side of the Illinois River, a mile above *Starved Rock*, finds the dead body of Elenor Murray, and the coroner, a public-spirited man who is interested in life and its mysteries, conducts an inquest. The result, as recorded in this book by the author of "Spoon River Anthology", "Toward the Gulf", "Starved Rock", etc., is a formidable revelation of the flights and eddies of one life—Elenor Murray's. An account is given of the birth and death of this woman, the inquest reveals the rest. The reader sees how a human being is adamant to one person and softer than clay to another—"the seed of that old grandma, who was mad, and cousin of Taylor, who did murder". And yet this is the estimate of Barrett Bays, her lover, the one in whose arms she died, of "syncope", that memorable day by the river.

"This Elenor Murray,  
What was she, just a woman a little life  
Swept in the war and broken? If no more,  
She is not worth these words. She is the  
symbol

Of our America, perhaps this world  
This side of India, of America  
At least she is the symbol. What was she?  
A restlessness, a hunger, and a zeal,  
A hope for goodness, and a tenderness;  
A love, a sorrow and a venturing will;  
A dreamer fooled, but dreaming still, a  
vision

That followed lures that fled her, generous,  
loving,

But also avid and insatiable;  
An egoism chained and starved too long  
That breaks away and runs, a cruelty,  
A wilfulness, a dealer in false weights,  
And measures of herself, her duty, others,  
A lust, a slick hypocrisy and a faith  
Faithless and hollow. But at last say  
She taught, saved me for myself, and  
turned

My steps upon the path of making self  
As much as I can make myself—my thanks  
To Elenor Murray!"

## THE OUTLINE OF HISTORY

BY H. G. WELLS. Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada.

THESE two large volumes do not pretend to be a record of the progress of the universe and of men therein, but rather a plain, understandable review of what has been revealed by historians, geologists, astrologists, biologists, indeed, by science and the scientists. It admits doubt frankly where doubt exists, and while the author favours the Darwinian theory of evolution, he confesses that the line of ancestry is broken here and there and that while indications point to an early creature, or creatures, that resembled men, so far no remains have been discovered that are final or convincing. But there are traces in the Upper Palæozoic Age which show the "first-known step of our own ancestry upon the land, the amphibia". Then come the "Mesozoic ancestors of all existing mammals up to and including man". The author proceeds to speculate on the origin of man, and concludes that he is descended from a walking ape. Still he confesses that the origin of man is "very obscure". He doubts descent from the ape, but he refers to crude stone implements found that must have been made about four hundred thousand years ago. But no remains have been found of any creature that might have used these stones. However, at Trinil, in Java, in strata that are said to correspond either to the later Pliocene or to the American or European First Ice Age, there have been found some scattered bones of a creature such as the makers of these early implements may have been—the top of a skull, some teeth, and a thigh bone. The skull shows a brain-case about half-way in size between that of the Chimpanzee and man. "We cannot say that it is a direct human ancestor, but we may guess that the creatures who scat-