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## Curiae: LAW IN ACTION. AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE LAW IN LITERATURE

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LAW IN ACTION. AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE LAW IN LITERATURE. Edited by *Amicus Curiae*. Introduction by *Roscoe Pound*. New York: Crown Publishers. 1947. Pp. xi, 498. \$3.00.

An anthology is seldom greeted with acclaim, for the reviewer misses a favorite selection. There may be an exception in *Law in Action*. Galsworthy's bitter play, *Justice*, is missing—fortunately or unfortunately—as is Gilbert and Sullivan, *Trial by Jury*. But in the range from Balzac, Boccaccio and Rabelais

to Train and Irvin Cobb; from the Gospels, Cervantes and Plutarch to Koestler's magnificent Rubashov, "confessing" before the Moscow trials—there is enough to please the most discriminating reader. Here, too, is Lewis Carroll and the trial of the Knave of Hearts; and *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, Sandburg on Lincoln, and many others. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the volume is the facility with which a passage is selected from an integrated novel, and made to stand alone with little loss in understanding or enjoyment for the reader. The trial of John Brown, for example, would be expected to lose force when severed from the context of *God's Angry Man*. Such is not the case. Nor does the brevity of the passage from Melville's *Billy Budd* detract from that story's grim mood. In the introduction, Dean Pound traces some of the history of the ill esteem in which non-legal writers seem to hold the law. It is his belief that the divorce of law-interpreting from the Church in the early Middle Ages was one beginning of public lack of sympathy for lawyers and legal technicalities. And he ascribes the "literary tradition" that judges must be "arbitrary and tyrannical" and lawyers "bigoted and pedantic or else dishonest" to the need for "dramatic interest."<sup>1</sup> His introduction is an entertaining beginning to an anthology which brilliantly fills a long felt need.

<sup>1</sup> Page x.