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Review of “Gaynor, The Tammany Mayor Who Swallowed the Tiger,” By Louis Heaton Pink

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Book Reviews

GAYNOR, *The Tammany Mayor Who Swallowed the Tiger*, by Louis Heaton Pink. New York: The International Press, 1931.

This biography was apparently written by a man whose admiration for William J. Gaynor occasionally interfered with a satisfactory interpretation of reported facts. The book, though written in swift journalese, is nevertheless interesting, partly because of the subject matter and partly because of that same swift writing that is too impatient to ferret out small, telling details or to resolve apparent contradictions of character.

William J. Gaynor's rise to political importance through the ancient route of the legal profession, as lawyer and judge, is an interesting story. The newspaper reporter's zest for shady political machinations is apparent, although usually there is more critical attention accorded to the maneuvers of Gaynor's enemies than to Gaynor's. However, Mr. Pink does succeed, in the main, in winning the reader's sympathy for Gaynor. Much effort is devoted to making Gaynor a political character, according to the American tradition. Clever excerpts from letters are quoted; witty bits of public addresses; short phrases that pass as philosophy or bible lore; all with intention of moulding a kindly, witty, philosophical, God-fearing figure, ruthless to those who do wrong, and lovable to the unfortunate.

Somewhere, beyond Mr. Pink's interesting language, is the real William J. Gaynor; and I, though I have the pleasure of having read an interesting book, do not yet know the Tammany Mayor Who Swallowed the Tiger.

MORRIS E. COHN.

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WHAT PRICE JURY TRIALS? by *Irvin Stalmaster*. Boston: The Stratford Company. 1931. Pp. ii, 143.

This little book, which the author in all modesty hopes "will evoke an avalanche of controversy from which eventually will flow substantial benefits to the administration of justice in civil cases," is the first publication, according to the author, to reveal to public gaze the actual operation of the jury system. Disclosing to the uninitiated the mysteries which only judges, lawyers, and court attendants heretofore have known, it is, nevertheless, a sensibly written volume which states clearly the case against juries in civil actions.

The aim of the book is to picture the jury system unclouded and unobscured by traditional hand-me-downs and popular opinion. The author dispels any belief of sanctity of the institution by showing the changes it has undergone since its origin, when first-hand knowledge of the case was an essential attribute of the jurors, rather than a disqualifying one, and when witnesses were unnecessary. His most telling point, however, is his demonstration of the large number of cases in which juries are never used to