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ONLY TO GOD: THE EXTRAORDINARY
LIFE OF GODFREY LOWELL CABOT,
by Leon Harris (Atheneum). Cabot,
who died in Boston in 1962 at the
age of a hundred and one, was in
many ways a quite terrible man.
Born a member of the Brahmin
sect, he grew up in comfortably gen-
teel surroundings, graduated from
Harvard, spent a *Wanderjahre* in
various European countries (which,
he found morally substandard), and,
returning home, went into the man-
ufacturing and sale of carbon black,
used in making printer's ink and,
much later (to Cabot's great enrich-
ment), automobile tires. Having be-
come a multimillionaire, Cabot could
turn his considerable energies to "be-
ing of service" to humanity, which,
to him, meant telling other people
what and what not to do as the lead-
ing spirit of Boston's Watch and
Word Society. Cabot, however, was
too eccentric to be all of a piece:
he was a prodigious athlete and he
played near-tournament chess; he
was a pioneer in aviation who learned
to fly at the age of fifty-four, bought
his own seaplane, and personally pil-
trolled the North Atlantic during the
First World War searching for Ger-
man submarines; he championed Ne-
groes and the fight for civil liberties
all his life; and although he was a
diehard, F.D.R.-hating Republican,
he declared that he saw no reason
that Communists should not be eligi-
ble for Army commissions. The au-
thor has handled this life story in
exactly the right way. He sets the
scene, he introduces his man, and
then he gives him his head, via a
journal that Cabot kept for forty
years, his letters, and the reminis-
cences of old acquaintances. Photo-
graphs.

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