

CHECK LIST of NEW BOOKS

CRITICISM

SHAKESPEARE STUDIES. *Historical and Comparative in Method.*

By Elmer Edgar Stoll. The Macmillan Company
\$4 8½ x 5¾; 502 pp. New York

Mr. Stoll, who is a member of the English faculty of the University of Minnesota, could have said what he has to say in just about half the space. His main contention, it would appear, is that "literature is no document. [It] reflects the taste of the time rather than the time itself, and often the two are widely different." This thesis he applies with deadening repetition not only to Elizabethan literature but also to the literatures of other times and nations. A long-winded, over-meticulous book. It has an index and numerous footnotes, but no formal bibliography.

MARCEL PROUST. *His Life and Work.*

By Leon Pierre-Quint. Alfred A. Knopf
\$3.50 8¾ x 5¾; 256 pp. New York

The first half of this book is strictly biographical, and is the first full-length portrait of Proust to appear; the second is a detailed study of "A La Recherche Du Temps Perdu." M. Pierre-Quint is a confessed worshipper of the man, but he manages to achieve a capital piece of work nevertheless. The translation from the French is by Hamish and Sheila Miles.

ROMANTICISM.

By Lascelles Abercrombie. The Viking Press
\$2 7½ x 5½; 192 pp. New York

"It will always belong to the business of romance," says Mr. Abercrombie in his nearest approach to a definition, "to provide escape from the familiar channels of regular experience; and it need be no more than this. But there are many ways, and many lengths of escape." A penetrating, often brilliant exposition of a subject that goes far toward clearing the "rather tangled thickets of opinion that have grown up about it." Unfortunately, it lacks both a bibliography and an index.

DANTE.

By John Jay Chapman. The Houghton Mifflin Company
\$2.50 9¾ x 6½; 99 pp. Boston

Stray notes on Dante's personality and poetry. There is very little in them that is new as fact or distinguished as criticism. Mr. Chapman charges Dante with having a "bad temper," and he thinks that his "lack of humor and of kindliness may shorten

the skirts of his fame as time goes on and as that passionate interest in the Middle Ages which marked the Nineteenth Century begins to decline."

MAIN CURRENTS IN AMERICAN THOUGHT. Volumes I and II

By Vernon Louis Parrington. Harcourt, Brace & Co.
\$8 8¾ x 5¾; 413 + 493 pp. New York

The first of these volumes is entitled "The Colonial Mind," and covers the period between 1620 and 1800. It deals with the clash between the harsh, absolutist, Presbyterian theology of the early settlers and the liberal European political philosophy of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, which was being transplanted over here. Mr. Parrington traces this conflict in the writings of all the major and minor divines and literati of the time, and in doing so sheds a great deal of light on a hitherto obscure period in the history of American culture. His discussion is always highly informing, and often quite penetrating. The chapters on the two Mathers are unusually good. Unluckily, the second volume is not up to the level of the first. It continues the analysis down to the beginning of the Civil War, and considers the influences of French Romanticism and English *laissez faire* doctrine on the political economy and literature of the country, with special reference to New England and the South. It is particularly in his treatment of the New Englanders that Mr. Parrington, who is professor of English at the University of Washington, leaves something to be desired. His studies of Emerson and Hawthorne are academic in the extreme: he fails to see through the essential hollowness of the first and the anachronistic literary position of the second. His chapters on such divines as Parker and Channing are a bit immature. He takes the blowsy metaphysical speculations of the first a little too seriously, and he seems to be blind to the essential orthodoxy of the second. There will be a third volume, which will bring the work down to 1920.

BIOGRAPHY

JEAN PAUL MARAT. *A Study in Radicalism.*

By Louis R. Gottschalk. Greenberg
\$3 9¼ x 6; 221 pp. New York

There is little strictly biographical material in this book; it is mainly a study of the politics of the man. Mr. Gottschalk says that very few facts are known about the life of Marat, but that what is known completely belies the theory that he was a criminal and a maniac.

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