

necessary to an understanding of his subject, stressing the artistic and idealistic sides of the matter. He traces the development of type forms from their inception with the unsurpassed work of Gutenberg through the dark ages of printing to the present, dwelling lovingly upon the typography of eighteenth century France, giving enough biography of the famous printers to show the conditions under which they did their work, and putting an effectual quietus upon the mistaken idea—for which he very properly blames Ruskin and Morris—that the mediæval craftsman worked in an idyllic atmosphere in which neither time nor cost was of account. The work is plainly that of a man writing about his hobby, and it is a pleasure to find that he is able to treat a historical and technical subject with a light touch which makes it readable. The book beautiful is no longer the mere dream of a printer, and this is not a manual for the composing room, albeit it contains that information which is indispensable in the composing room producing beautiful work. The collector of books has taken this field for his own, and Mr. Updike's work, which combines the wisdom of the ancient writers on typography with his own original ideas on the subject of printing types, is not only a book lover's book, but monumental in its character, likely to fix the standards for years to come. If some modern designers may feel that insufficient homage has been paid to their part in the present revival, they may console themselves with the reflection that Mr. Updike has not failed to criticize his own Merry-mount types.

Printing Types: Their History, Forms and Use. By Daniel Berkeley Updike. Two volumes. Harvard University Press.

## ASSORTED NOVELS

By John V. A. Weaver

CLEMENT WOOD is a poet who has written some very fine verse at times. But he is not yet a novelist, nor does he show any signs of becoming one in this long story of his. He must learn that a novel must have some form, some technique; it cannot be simply a string of episodes, loosely connected, with no emphasis, no climaxes, no real body to it. "Nigger" was undoubtedly meant to stir up people over the way the blacks are treated in the south; Mr. Wood should know, for he is a southerner. His incidents are typical: that is, they are the stuff of which first-page atrocity journalism is made. They fail to be very interesting, because Mr. Wood's characters are too much types. He never makes any of them emerge into individuals. They are "niggers", granted; but none of them is an individual Negro. He has not shown the psychology of any of them. The book reads like a report of a committee on conditions. The illustrations of white depredations are gruesome and revolting enough, but they did not affect this reader, at any rate. "Birthright" and "White and Black" covered all the ground which "Nigger" attempts, and did it so well that Mr. Wood's book, not only no novel, is not even a tract worth reading. It is amateurish in conception and execution.

Ernest Poole is a clever technician, and he has an original idea in this story, "Millions". Gordon Cable, reputed to be a millionaire, is dying from injuries received in an automobile accident. His sister Madge, a countrified little old maid—not so old in years, but "sot" in her ways—has been summoned from her small town

to nurse him. She knows that she will probably inherit all her brother's money if he dies. The other Cable relatives arrive, and hang over the dying man with vulture-like anticipation. All of them, Madge included, build air castles with the money almost within their grasp. But Madge is a commendable human being; she really loves this strange brother who has grown away from all of them. And, realizing that by passively sitting around she can let Gordon die, she does everything in her power to restore his health. She succeeds, and she also succeeds in being a potent factor in bringing about Gordon's marriage to an actress who has been the object of considerable insult on the part of the other relatives. It turns out there wouldn't have been any millions after all if Gordon had died. But the effect on Madge of the internal struggle and the position of prospective heir to great sums of money in which she lived for a while, revolutionizes her whole life, and frees her from her shackles of inactivity.

Altogether a very interesting psychological study, well constructed and well written.

Joseph C. Lincoln always puts out a product which lives up to its trademark. The reader knows that when he opens a Lincoln novel he is going to get Cape Cod sea captains and Cape Cod talk, literarily quaint characters, and a good standard blow-my-mizzen-tops's humor. "Fair Harbor" is a good Lincoln story, all about a middle aged sea captain who has retired temporarily on account of accidents to his legs. He has wished on him the job of superintending a home for mariners' women, and his many trials and vicissitudes, mixed up with his case of love for his pretty young as-

sistant, afford much of the "good clean fun" to which Lincoln addicts are used. It is a marvel to me how Lincoln spins out his yarns; he makes the most threadbare material go a very long way. Truth to tell, he is not uninteresting, either. If you like Lincoln's stuff, you will like "Fair Harbor".

An ambitious piece of work is "The Wind Bloweth". It is dense with Celtic atmosphere. Indeed, Mr. Byrne has taken so much pains with putting a magic and a romance about his seven incidents in the life of Shane Campbell that I found it hard going, often. It is not so clear a narrative as "Messer Marco Polo", but there are many flashes of that same epic beauty. Mr. Byrne hasn't quite hit what he is driving at, but he has come close to it; and there is not a doubt in the world that he will succeed fully one of these days. Shane Campbell wanders through the world, in many lands, an idealist and a dreamer. At first he is looking for a dancing island which we are led to believe exists only in his imagination. Then he looks for love, and at last finds it, after several trials. The stories are too strangely conceived and written to allow close analysis. Let it suffice to say that Donn Byrne has caught romance and beauty many times, and these times make up for much difficult reading.

"Where the Blue Begins" strikes me as being some excellent writing wasted upon trivialities. The story is an allegory, I suppose. Also, I believe it must have been intended for a children's book. It is all about a dog named Gissing, who lives a suburban life, wears a silk hat, and gets a job as floorwalker in a big department store. He quits this job, fearing that he is becoming too smug and contented, and stows away upon a

ship, and from there on the thing is an extravaganza. There are isolated passages of a fineness which make me feel very badly for Mr. Morley, a writer of high abilities who can waste his time upon so silly and unsuccessful a *tour de force*.

Nigger. By Clement Wood. E. P. Dutton and Co.

Millions. By Ernest Poole. The Macmillan Co.

Fair Harbor. By Joseph C. Lincoln. D. Appleton and Co.

The Wind Bloweth. By Donn Byrne. The Century Co.

Where the Blue Begins. By Christopher Morley. Doubleday, Page and Co.

#### FOUR POETS

By Louis Untermeyer

LET us say the worst about Herbert Gorman's poetry at once, for its defects are so obvious that, unless they are granted and disposed of first, they are likely to obscure the very definite qualities that distinguish "The Barcarole of James Smith". The worst thing is this: almost half of the work is frankly imitative. Gorman, it is evident, has worshiped at the dissimilar shrines of E. A. Robinson and T. S. Eliot, and a great part of his book is a record of his efforts to join both gods — and free himself from them. The first page is all Eliot, or rather a mirthless parody of his mordant idiom.

In Ethiopia, the sun  
Shines forever. Cinnamon  
And aromatics spice the air,  
And Candace is black and rare.

Several of the succeeding poems acknowledge the identical influence; even the titles are in precisely the same key as the one developed by

the author of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock". Instead of Eliot's "Sweeney among the Nightingales" or "Bleistein with a Cigar", we have Gorman's "The Melody of Patrick Murphy" and "Einstein Practises". The Robinsonian indebtedness is more deeply felt though less pronounced; it is sensed rather than seen. Only in one or two of the lyrics and in one lengthy blank verse monologue is the reader forced to recognize the obligation. Robinson's famous "Ben Jonson Entertains a Man from Stratford" is the most eloquent portrait of Shakespeare ever written in verse. Gorman, in exactly the same form, writes a long soliloquy entitled "The Son of Dawn" and attempts to do the very thing for Christopher Marlowe.

So much for the debits. The credit side of the ledger shows a decided balance in Gorman's favor. Here is something positive — a lyric strength coupled with an intellectual intensity that is the poet's own. "The Mandrake Root" and "Rainy Night" are two particularly illuminating examples. Some of the verses reprinted from his first collection, a tentative but searching pamphlet called "The Fool of Love", are on a similarly high plane. I regret that I have not sufficient space to quote three or four of them; from one, at least, I must detach an illustrative quatrain or two. This is the beginning of the sharply conceived, sharply executed "Love's Fanatic":

Well, here it is: you call for me: I come,  
But with an eagerness not quite my own,  
Propelled by that decisive martyrdom  
That pleased the saints upon their faggot-throne.

You see them smiling in the cruel flame  
That exquisitely licks their willing limbs.  
And finding some sad pleasure in the game  
Not quite embodied in their lusty hymns.