

for the most part the work is well cut, the words accurately inlaid; and when this poet can give us those sidelights into doubt that lend the charm and distinction of humanity, little more need be asked of her.

"Giving and Receiving" by E. V. Lucas (Doran) is the title of the first essay in this book. To read it alone would appease in no small way the irritation that may be felt on Christmas Day at some of the presents one receives—for one has forgotten the presents given. Mr. Lucas has given us a rare little book of wide outlook and varied emotions—from the delicious humor of "The Battle of the Mothers" to the pitiful tragedy of "Whenever I See a Grey Horse".

Some of the human senses and emotions are interestingly dissected before one's eyes by Robert Chenault Givler in "Psychology" (Harper), a discussion of the science of human behavior. Mr. Givler employs humor and a goodly seasoning of comprehension of the average reader's limitations. The result is that a subject which might easily be so written as to give the reader the willywogs is presented with commendable clarity.

"How international good manners might be improved if all nations and races could see themselves as others see them," says Andrew Gerrie, borrowing a phrase from the immortal Bobbie for use in "Ireland's Woes and Britain's Wiles" (Stratford), a pleasing book in which whimsically he ridicules some nations' foibles. He points out that "some men who happen to be our misrepresentatives at Washington do not constitute America; the fire-eaters of Japan are not Japan; the Junkers and flannelled fools of

England are not England, and dear old Ireland is a whole lot bigger and better than Sinn Fein." Mr. Gerrie's effort is clearly to uncover grounds whereon nations may clasp hands in understanding and amity instead of "sticking pins in each other's trousers".

Aprils, their afternoons, and their second coming, fascinate the poets. In these "Afternoons of April" (Houghton Mifflin) Grace Hazard Conkling is at her excellent best. She is easily, almost too easily, a poet, a reed for varied and delightful interpretations of the earth's beauty to sound through. Only once in a long while, as in her "Joan of Arc", has she put a right finger on deeper emotions. Her forte is atmosphere, the lighter tones and colors, and her best songs are chamber music.

The true art of joke telling is possessed by few. But there is one man who not only knows a good joke, but who has made joking his business for many years. Thomas L. Masson, in "Listen to These" (Doubleday, Page), offers a galaxy of choice jokes accumulated during a twenty year incumbency as editor of "Life". There is wide enough range to make the collection welcome to both those who insist meticulously upon jokes of the intellectual sort, and those whose taste runs to a clever twist and ridiculous situations.

There is a sincerity about Fred Lewis Pattee's "Sidelights on American Literature" (Century) which is pleasant even though it smacks somewhat of lavender. The studies of Longfellow, Poe, Bryant, and Mary W. Freeman show a good deal of sympathy and insight. The best thing

about the all-embracing résumé of H. L. Mencken's career is the title of the chapter, "A Critic in C Major". We very much suspect that Mr. Pattee does not fully understand this "enfant terrible". In fact we noticed that, at one point, he quoted a paragraph of the learned gentleman's and then attacked it on grounds which showed that he could not have comprehended the essential point of the quotation. The matter in question, by the way, was the duties of critics and gentlemen.

"The Book of the Sky" by M. Luckiesh (Dutton) is a bewildering volume. It evidently could not make up its mind whether to be scientific, appreciative, or merely rhapsodic. So it decided to take turns at all three. These moods, all of them, are frequently interspersed with lyrical quotations from Bryant, Thomson, Coleridge, et al. In its scientific moods, the book reveals some interesting passages. Particularly, certain descriptions of the sensations during aerial excursions are given vividly and *con amore*.

To hail Jane Austen anew as a spirit of all time is a rare and happy experience. And to find that Jane Austen at seventeen, writing of "Love and Freindship" (Stokes), was even then an artist, however individual her orthography, one has only to read this newly published book of hers with its uproarious and uncannily clever burlesque of the Evelinas, Cecilias, and Clarissas who were still popular in Jane Austen's day. Only the "Bab Ballads" where

Freddy fainted on a stool,
And Johnny on the top of Freddy,

have approached the scene of "Sophia

fainting every moment and I running mad as often". The book is full of quotable bits. There are complete characterizations even in the fragments and the imaginary letters, some of them clearly calling to mind the people of "Sense and Sensibility" and of "Northanger Abbey".

The "New Larned History for Ready Reference, Reading and Research" (C. A. Nichols) is a cyclopædia which gives historic treatment to topics in politics, law, religion, economics, science, and so on. The articles are composed almost entirely of extracts from the works of great writers and historians. The necessity and advantage of this method are far from obvious, but if we concede them we must also concede that the editors and their assistants have done their work well. There are numerous illustrations, maps, and charts; and some of the material is quoted from surprisingly recent publications, e.g., accounts of the proceedings at the Paris Conference.

Not infrequently, the latter moments of a man's declining years are filled with speculation on the life to come. So we are not surprised to find our beloved naturalist, John Burroughs, dwelling on the great mystery in "The Last Harvest" (Houghton Mifflin), a posthumous volume. But it does shock somewhat to see him so despairing about it all. "I wish there were something to light up the grave for me, but there is not," he cries. "The faith of all the saints and martyrs does not help *me*," he adds despondently. "I must see the light beyond with my own eyes." That more than fourscore years of observation and meditation should result in such a hopeless frame of mind is a sad