

finest. It is the spontaneous-sounding ones — those that he could not keep from writing — that show him at his best. At the back of the book there is a collection of "Savage Portraits", skilful but too vicious to be good reading, which it is advisable to skip lest they spoil the pleasant impression left by the poems.

A volume of appealing essays that reveal a personality æsthetically melancholy, mystically wistful, intellectually perceptive, and apparently unconsciously and incidentally poetic, is "Through the Torii" (Four Seas). We fancy that Yone Noguchi meant to indicate himself in this symbolic gateway that frames the distant or near prospect of a temple, shrine, or holy mountain as "an august signal that your earthly ambition should not go any further; through the Torii you reach the land holy and innocent". Mr. Noguchi, in what an English reviewer terms "bent" prose, catches the atmosphere of a moss-green and grey Japanese city or of a red-lacquer and gold temple flaring against a hillside; regrets the upheaval of Japanese culture through the invasion of western commercialism, visits an old poet, compares the oriental and occidental theories of poetry, and gives a Japanese's appraisal of Whistler, Rossetti, Yeats, and Oscar Wilde, with a bias that is due to individuality and not to theory, without propaganda or dogmatism, with the surety of one who has mastered the secrets of a self that is as delicately atmospheric as a Japanese landscape. The epigrams, collected under the headings, "Netsuke" and "From a Japanese Ink-Slab", are often poignantly ironic.

Parody is the cartooning of litera-

ture, the elevation of the characteristics of the artists to an insupportable predominance. Such, at least, is our definition as derived from J. C. Squire's "Collected Parodies" (Doran), wherein the English poet and essayist criticizes in burlesque the more acute mannerisms of contemporary and past poets, dramatists, politicians, schools, and sects. We experience so strongly the emotion of recognition (*vide* Henry James) when a poem opens

You dirty hog,
You snouty snipe,
You lump of mud,
You bag of tripe,

that it scarcely needs the author's advice for us to know that this is an example of what we might have got "if Mr. Masfield had written 'Casa-bianca'". Mr. Squire, we would add, rather maliciously favors Mr. Masfield, for he gives us not only, "The Poet in the Back Streets", and "The Merciful Widow", but also "If Wordsworth had written 'The Everlasting Mercy'" and takes a final whirl in "If Gray had had to write his Elegy in the Cemetery of Spoon River instead of that of Stoke Poges". Not that the parodist's slap stick is guilty of unfair favoritism. It is a very agile weapon, able to hit in two places at once. For the rest Maeterlinck shudders vaporously at us; Wilde expounds sterile epigrams; Rabindranath Tagore exercises metaphysically over "Little Drops of Water"; Davies is reduced to an absurd simplicity. Wells is rejuvenated at the end of each chapter by meeting a new woman, and Chesterton beams a bland golden smile through a purple mist of fabulous prose.

"The Study of American History" by Viscount Bryce (Macmillan) comprises the inaugural lecture of the

Sir George Watson chair of American history, literature, and institutions, which was conceived for the purpose of enlarging Englishmen's knowledge of America and fostering a closer family feeling between the two lands. The author, than whom there probably could be no better authority, divides American history into periods and directs how it can best be studied.

"Famous Stories from Foreign Countries", translated by Edna Worthley Underwood (Four Seas), introduces one to a wealth of literature ordinarily not accessible to the English-speaking public. There is intensity and pathos, humor and irony, social protest and moral significance in these tales from the Bohemian, Armenian, Austrian, Hungarian, Finnish, Norwegian, and Dutch. The stories vary as widely in theme and manner of treatment as the countries in which they were written; in contrast to a tragic episode from peasant life, we come across a satiric account of an imaginary king; and offsetting a parable on the decay of character, we find the tale of a prisoner unjustly doomed to death. No matter what the subject, however, the stories are interesting and vivid, and have the impress of genuine literature.

The Authors' League has published a book for the benefit of needy authors, entitled "My Maiden Effort" (Doubleday, Page). It is a collection of 125 accounts by successful writers of their first attempts. A large majority are childhood recollections, with frequent quotations which prove that successful writers are not recognizable in embryo. Most of the accounts are humorous and give an impression of a joyous sense of achievement. They remind one of a

climber who has gained the top of a mountain and is yodeling down to his friends who are still on the way. There are accounts of oft-returning manuscripts, long delays, microscopic payment (or none at all), and the other familiar difficulties that will be very encouraging to young writers.

Gamaliel Bradford has turned an earnest investigator's eye on the biographies and writings of the men who make up his gallery of "American Portraits, 1875-1900" (Houghton Mifflin). The result is a series of excellent psychological pictures—almost soul sketches—of Mark Twain, Henry James, James G. Blaine, J. McNeil Whistler, Henry Adams, Sidney Lanier, Grover Cleveland, and Joseph Jefferson. He reveals something in each that helps tremendously in understanding idiosyncrasies.

In these days, when the drift of opinion is strongly in the direction of democracy, it is as interesting as it is anomalous to come across a serious appeal for monarchy. Yet Hilaire Belloc's volume on "The House of Commons and Monarchy" (Harcourt, Brace) is reactionary to the extent of advocating monarchy rather than the present representative system of government. The House of Commons, he maintains, is in an advanced stage of decay; it belongs essentially to an aristocratic state, and is ill adapted to function under present conditions; the only remedy is in a responsible monarch. Mr. Belloc's arguments are ingenuous, and he succeeds in making out a strong case; but his conclusions strike one as insufficiently established, and one accepts them with reluctance.

Henry W. Fisher defies memory's