

the text is sufficiently simple — and uninspiring — to please the conventional mind. It is a pity that a man with Orpen's pictorial talents should be unequal to an enlightening treatise on his art. It is a greater misfortune that the monetary reward of such a childish opus is assured, indicating, as it does, the monumental credulity and obviousness of the American mind.

There comes from Dutton a new edition — and a cheaper one, *laus Deo* — of "Far Away and Long Ago" by W. H. Hudson. Not that the format, as we professionals love to call it, matters with this book. Under the enchantment of a distant land, strange birds, and level plains shimmering in the light of a golden sun, such incidents as print and binding fade from the eager mind. A leisurely narrative of the active and intelligent life of an imaginative child, this autobiography of the early years of Hudson's life is told in such clean and carven prose as fills with delight the heart of the weary reviewer.

A few years ago it would have required much courage for any writer to adopt an attitude of criticism toward democracy, or to question its adequacy as an ideal for the management of human affairs. B. Kingsley Martin, however, boldly opens his careful study of the Crimean war and Lord Palmerston with the remark that "Of all the unexamined assumptions of democracy none seems so strange today as the belief that public opinion is a reliable guide for a political society". The gist of "The Triumph of Lord Palmerston" (Dial) is a demonstration of the fallaciousness of that assumption. It is primarily a study in the genesis and quality of popular opinion: specifically, an analysis of "the development of

English public opinion on foreign affairs in the years preceding the Crimean war". Mr. Martin finds it, in the main, illogical, without much foundation in fact, largely a product of the newspapers and of unthinking following of catchwords and traditional notions. The result was what Disraeli aptly called a "just but unnecessary war". Mr. Martin's examination of the complex elements of this total of public opinion is acutely penetrating: it is, to some extent, breaking a new path for the historian. The book is very carefully documented and is readably fluent.

You will hardly believe it until you see it, but here in one compact volume are all the essayists, poets, letter writers, novelists, and popular scientists of English literature. The volume is "The Modern Student's Book of English Literature" (Scribner). It is edited by three professors: Ayres of Columbia, Howe of Indiana, and Padelford of Washington. Assuming — and sometimes one hates to — that there are well over half a million words in our language worth reading, the anthologizers have gleaned well. From "Widsith" to Galsworthy, from "Beowulf" to Francis Brett Young, they have omitted almost nothing. Indeed, collaboration with the thin-paper makers has enabled them to represent each author with considerable bulk.

It is too bad that C. H. Charles could not have given a better title to his "Love Letters of Great Men and Women" (Brentano). The name is apt enough, for that is just what the book contains, but it sounds too much like the blatant advertisements of the instalment plan houses with their suggestive illustrations. As a collection of important literary documents, the

book is worthwhile. Charles has borrowed from numerous works previously published, but that does not matter, for his purpose is to give a broad picture of love inspired missives from Pope to the twentieth century. It is questionable whether the compiler's comments add much to the worth of the volume, for the letters really speak better for themselves than he does.

The fourth volume of "Wonders of the Past", edited by J. A. Hammerton (Putnam), is a fitting conclusion to the series. It deals with all the ancient splendors and ruins not described in the previous three volumes, and contains interesting and instructive chapters on the cliff dwellings of America, the catacombs of old Rome, the rock carvings of prehistoric Britain and Brittany, the sculpture and masonry of the Empire of the Hittites, the theatres of Greece, the temples of Jerusalem, and the ship builders of Egypt and of Tyre. The profuse illustrations maintain the high standard set by the previous members of the series, and the text, while scanty, is exceedingly readable and conveys much valuable information.

In "Robert Smith Surtees" (Scribner), by Himself and E. D. Cuming, we have a lifelike portrait of a singularly upright and memorable early Victorian whose achievement as a man of letters was somewhat dimmed by that of his greater contemporaries. The reminiscent chapters, by Surtees himself, suggest in strong outline the completed picture of the man with which his biographer, E. D. Cuming, fills two thirds of the volume. It is an impartial tribute to the creator of "Jorrocks", to the man who wrote the first and best satirical novels of the English landed gentry of his day.

It is Edwin E. Slosson who does for science in this country what J. Arthur Thomson does in England — with this difference, that Dr. Slosson takes his lay readers into all the departments of science. He includes physics, chemistry, astronomy, and other pure sciences besides biology, together with their applications. Thus the short papers collected in "Keeping Up with Science" (Harcourt, Brace), some from the pens of the staff of Science Service, deal with recent discoveries about hormones, dreams, the weather, insulin, white coal, the heat of a star, visible sound, a mercury engine, de-inking newspaper, concrete in building, and so on. Not the least valuable part of Dr. Slosson's work, however, is his emphasis throughout upon the method and spirit of science.

Books of the type of "Isles of Eden" by Laura Lee Davidson (Minton, Balch), to be good at all, must be very good indeed. This volume has much in its favor, but it just falls short of what we hoped it might be. In diary form Miss Davidson faithfully recounts a summer's experiences close to nature in a wild portion of Canada, giving an accurate picture and one not lacking in detail. Yet there is a great gap between appreciation of nature and the ability to get it onto a printed page, without letting the stars grow dim and the woods lose something of their tang. With an observant eye and a fine feeling for the world of outdoors, Miss Davidson has filled her book with interesting material, but she verges upon sentimentality and tends to employ trite and hackneyed phraseology as occasion permits. Try as we will we cannot lose ourselves in "Isles of Eden"; that printed page simply does not seem to change into "a canoe and the shadow of a rock".