

THE EDITOR RECOMMENDS—

BOOKS THAT MAY HAVE ESCAPED YOU

1. "*Augustus Baldwin Longstreet*" by John Donald Wade (Macmillan). A charming and illuminating study of southern life and culture.

2. "*Doctor Dolittle*" by Hugh Lofting (Stokes). An American classic for children that should not be forgotten.

3. "*The Singing Season*" by Isabel Paterson (Boni, Liveright). Lovely romance of religion in old Spain.

4. "*The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*" by Burton J. Hendrick (Doubleday, Page). An illuminating piece of American biography.

5. "*The Meaning of Prayer*" by Harry Emerson Fosdick (Doran). An early Fosdick book that is finely inspirational.

Newspaper Romance

GREAT men sometimes survive as quiet personalities illumined by great deeds. Joseph Pulitzer, as pictured in Don Seitz's "Joseph Pulitzer: His Life and Letters" (Simon, Schuster), was not without great and romantic deeds; but his quixotic egotism quite overshadows his achievements. This is a fine record of an unusual man — a man loved by his contemporaries in spite of astounding personal mannerisms; a man who suffered physical affliction bravely and carried on a great business in spite of it. Imagine the mind which could dream of wanting a war just to see what it would do to a newspaper! Such, Mr. Seitz intimates, was his feeling toward our slight conflict with Spain. His papers were his life, and he was the newspaper man

first, last, and always. Indomitable, restless, sensitive, highly imaginative — his demand was for power and for intellectual righteousness. His attempt to shoot Captain Edward Augustine, a political opponent in St. Louis, at first seemed the action of a rash youth; but the clean up in lobbyist methods that resulted seemed to justify the fury. So much of his often strange violence achieved spectacular and worthwhile results. The biography becomes a history of politics, thought, and newspaper development as well as a record of Mr. Pulitzer. Seitz draws a clever, if somewhat onesided, sketch of Rooseveltian methods. Mr. Hearst is sketched in through J. P.'s eyes. New York "World" events are detailed and prove interesting. There is given much of the personality of the late Frank I. Cobb and of Mr. Pulitzer's advice, encouragement, and admonishment to that great editor. Mr. Seitz has told a romantic and a dramatic story, and one in which facts and incidents abound. It must have been a rare man who could virtually run a paper for eighteen years during which he visited his office only three times. So actual did that absent personality become, with his scrawled messages from Bar Harbor or his cables from the yacht "Liberty" at Nice, that he seemed still to exert a paternal influence over those of us whose apprenticeship on the "World" came long after his death. "Accuracy, Terse-ness, Accuracy" are words no "World" man will forget, though he may neglect to apply them. A weak man does not recognize a fundamental weakness as did Mr. Pulitzer. He knew that vital-

ity, vigor, suddenness of idea were a part of his genius. He knew they were also his danger. He counseled his men to disregard an order that seemed to them unwise, impulsive or foolish. Although he often became furious when his dictates were not followed, if his judgment proved unsound he was quick to acknowledge fault. I have failed to emphasize in this review the "success" story of the foreign youngster coming into Boston to become one of America's leading citizens. It is a great story; but the greater story, and one which Mr. Seitz has painted well, is of the years of blindness and detachment, in which keen interest was always preserved and the vivid hand of the master apparent to the last. I should like to quote one table of editorial instructions as example of the temperament of this quixotic and unequaled journalist:

1. Don't commit the paper for Bryan unless you hear from me.
2. Don't hamper the paper's freedom for the next forty days to do anything after that.
3. Don't cease vigorous opposition to Rooseveltism in all phases; ditto Republicanism whenever wrong.
4. Don't say an unnecessary unkind word about Taft. Treat him fairly. Not a word of untruth under any circumstances against him or Bryan; or anybody else, not even Hearst.
5. Don't hesitate to criticise Taft politically as Roosevelt's proxy or dummy until he disproves it.
6. Don't defend Bryan on any charge made against him which you know to be founded.
7. Don't hesitate at all proper times to repeat that his platform is a great improvement over '96 and 1900 especially on (a) jingoism and Roosevelt's war fake spirit (b) Philippinism (c) Publicity Plank (d) Tariff Reform (e) Retrenchment in National Expenses. Bryan coming to it rather than the "World" going to them.
8. Don't comment on everything Bryan says. Don't be afraid to ignore his speeches and talk. Don't forget that you are not compelled to write and express an opinion on anything; that *silence, silence, silence* is peculiarly wise at times.

9. Don't, whatever happens, ever say that Bryan will or should be elected or that he is even fit and qualified.

10. Don't forget that I will give you several hats after the election if you can observe these rules, especially the last No. 9.

All this subject to change, perhaps tomorrow, if the news and facts should change.

A Homely Trilogy

OF Herbert Quick's three interlocked stories of the old midwest "Vandemark's Folly" remains for me the most glamorous. Yet each is good "The Invisible Woman" (Bobbs-Merrill) a shade better reading than "The Hawkeye", its progression and development as a story surer. Christina Thorkelson and Owen Gowdy carry the main incidents of this homely yet occasionally melodramatic story. They were born of the same mother, Rowena Fewkes, whose tragedy was exposed in "Vandemark's Folly". This is a story of the law and its manipulations, of two rival firms, of a judge and his insane wife, of political strivings in that early midwest. The framework is adorned by Herbert Quick's really fine ability to draw characters that immediately catch the interest. His book is packed with them. You follow the story for their sakes, and yet it is curiosity to find out what happens to them rather than any real love or friendship for them that drives you on. This circumstance is due to a curious detachment on the part of the author. His style is clear, dry, unadorned; he stands away and watches his story develop before him. He has a perfect right to his method; but if the reader misses passion and glow of words and emotion, he must, I think, blame this peculiarity of technique. The book yet remains one of the most interesting

f current novels. The insanity of Mrs. Silverthorn is handled with droitness and perception, the trial scene is clear and dramatic. The trilogy, as a whole, demands our respect and admiration. Even higher compliments may be paid Mr. Quick, for his books can be reread with interest, so called are they with amusing and colorful detail.

In the Winter a Poet's Fancy—

[T is seldom in one month that four American poets appear whose work is really worth recommending for one season or another. Of the four remarked here, William Ellery Leonard is, perhaps, the best poet; but it is Mark Van Doren's "Spring Thunder" (Seltzer) that I should like best to have upon my shelves. Van Doren's stark lyrics remind occasionally of the early Robert Frost. They have a warmer note, though. They are less dramatic, with a more human love of the small idiosyncrasies of nature. The one criticism I should make of these beautiful and carefully fashioned and tender poems is in regard to the thing on which the poet probably most prides himself, his casualness. To me it seems a mannerism; to another it may seem a strength. He chooses a single incident and, without particular development, makes a poem of it. "Javelins" is, for example, a lovely pastoral — too casual for complete success, yet undoubtedly successful in doing what Van Doren meant it to do. "Big Mare", on the other hand, strikes me as a thoroughly lovely dramatic lilt. Van Doren likes animals, and many of his poems pay tribute to them, quietly. He is a quiet poet, and a real poet. Among the younger men he takes rank, it seems to

me, along with Hervey Allen, among the first four or five. William Ellery Leonard, in "Tutankhamen and After" (Huebsch) adds a series of excellent dramatic lyrics to his other collected volumes. I have not been fortunate enough to see the privately printed "Two Lives" of which are published such encomiums in the back of this volume. I find some of these later poems of Mr. Leonard's dull; but they are always illuminated by fine lines and the volume is made excellent by such poems as "Indian Summer" or "Lucretius". Martha Ostenso's "A Far Land" (Seltzer) is spirited and gay in execution. She has a true lyric sense and uses it without stutters of self-consciousness. A normal book, and one that will please. I don't like always to be finding other poets in people's work, but there are echoes here of both Mrs. Wylie and Miss Millay; not too strong, though, to eliminate originality. Beautifully printed, quaintly bound, the fragile verses of Hildegard Flanner again appear. She has been some time silent. Her strange gift has matured. H. D. and Miss Flanner have coldness and quietness in common; but under H. D.'s detachment runs a flame that is missing in these faint yet beautiful clamorings of a young girl's soul for expression. Mysticism, too, has its place here. Four or five exquisite lyrics would mark "A Tree in Bloom" (Lantern Press) as notable. Such a one is the last poem:

TO ONE OF LITTLE FAITH

Put out the mourners from your heart;
And bid your still soul rise.
It is not death, but only sleep
That fastens down your eyes.

Return, O Galilean days,
Judean hands, return!
Make bloom the lily in the ash
Of this neglected urn.

— J. F.

A SHELF OF RECENT BOOKS

INTERPRETING THOREAU

By Gordon Hall Gerould

LÉON BAZALGETTE, who in 1908 dealt faithfully with Walt Whitman, has now published the results of his study of Thoreau in a somewhat similar volume, admirably translated by Van Wyck Brooks. Although unencumbered by footnotes—in this respects differing from the book on Whitman—it is a painstaking performance, commendable for the industry with which M. Bazalgette has exploited the abundant material ready to the hand of a biographer. It is commendable, too, for the honest effort made to interpret afresh the singularly gifted and puzzling—if somewhat puzzleheaded—creature who in the Forties and Fifties of the last century observed man and nature from the vantage point of Concord, Massachusetts.

If the book is not altogether a success, it is rather because of the author's limitations as a literary craftsman than because he has not tried very hard. He has attempted to recall Thoreau as M. Maurois attempted to evoke young Shelley in his brilliant "Ariel", but with a more rigid adherence to the documents in the case and a stricter rein on his fancy. Out of Thoreau's books and the invaluable "Journal" he has woven a narrative in which he has aimed to show both the pattern of a life and its explanation. In a measure he has succeeded, since the figure of Thoreau emerges with some degree of clarity as the story proceeds.

Unfortunately he has made a rather dull book, whereas the only justification for writing a biography in the manner

of a novel is surely a heightening of interest. I have no means of knowing whither M. Bazalgette's English studies have led him, except that he has conformed with Whitman and the Concord group, but I suspect him of a passion for Thomas Carlyle, who in his time wrote biography in much the same manner—though in very different language—as that rediscovered by Mr. Strachey and M. Maurois. The fact is that M. Bazalgette's book at least in its English form, reads like Carlyle gone very wrong. All the worst mannerisms are there: the use of the present tense in a wild struggle for vividness, the direct address with the wearisome epithet, the question flung at a hypothetical audience—the whole spurt and splutter of Carlylese. Much has to be forgiven Carlyle, since he has an imaginative grasp, a wit, a power of phrase beyond those of common men but no one save Herman Melville has ever succeeded in getting effects by the same means, unless, that is, Walt Whitman owes more to him than is generally supposed.

M. Bazalgette, at all events, is not of the race of giants. He grows tedious in his effort to be picturesque, which is a pity, since he has probably understood Thoreau as well as any continental European ever could. His notion of a New England village like Concord is obviously colored, to be sure, by his knowledge of French provincial towns, and his reading of New England character is imperfect; but he has patiently constructed in his own mind a fairly accurate model of the little world in which Henry Thoreau played his wilfully lonely game. Had he been