

headline reader who takes the trouble to read M. Bonnard's volume of impressions will find that, though it was written in 1920-21, such sections as "In the Towns" and such chapters as "The Soul of China" afford an excellent corrective for the propaganda smoke screen with which the newspapers try to obscure the real points at issue between China and the Western powers.

G. H. Johnstone arranges his biography of "Prosper Mérimée" (Dutton) in the two not completely convincing divisions, "A Mask" and "A Face". The former treats of Mérimée the writer, first in the forefront of the new literary movements of his time, later when "the age stretches away from him" and he holds fast to the literary convictions of his youth; of Mérimée the government archæologist; and Mérimée the devoted servant of the Emperor. The second treats of him as the man, revealed through his love letters to an unknown woman. The separation seems a little forced; the "Face" is genuine, but surely all the rest is not a mask. However, despite a flowing, slightly indirect manner of writing, quite different from the incisive, terse style of most contemporary biography, Mr. Johnstone has made of this romantic writer a figure of real poignancy and personality.

Outlines of anything, contributing as they doubtless do to the gradual dissemination of this and that, must be boosted by all who look forward eagerly to the millennium. "A Short History of Art" (Scribner), a translation from the French of André S. Blum, edited and enlarged by R. R. Tatlock, is a meritorious review of a vast subject in one volume of reasonable size. Mr. Tatlock has generally rejuvenated the popular French work, re-illustrating it completely, extending the nineteenth century and other sections, and adding a chapter on current tendencies. Here we have a non-controversial text and a sizable gallery of "the sort of art that interests most people", ranging from prehistoric times to last week. For a more restricted audience is Oscar Hagen's "Art Epochs and Their Leaders" (Scribner), a survey of the genesis of modern art distinguished in manner and persuasive in its purpose "to demon-

strate the unity beneath the manifold historical mutations of artistic endeavor". Handsome illustrations adorn this welcome study.

It doesn't seem especially interesting that you can go to the phone, call up the grocer, and order a package of prunes sent up right away, because everyone knows that all the grocer has to do to produce the prunes is reach his hand to the shelf on which he keeps them. But it is very interesting to learn that these healthful little fruits grow on trees which were "created" some forty years ago by a nursery gardener in California to fill the order, turned down by all the other nurserymen around, of a horticulturist for twenty thousand prune trees to be delivered within a few months' time. The young nursery gardener was Luther Burbank, and it took a much greater gesture than raising his hand to fill that order, for he didn't begin to have the goods tucked away on a certain shelf. He did have the genius and energy, however, to create a species of prune tree that would grow quickly enough for him to deliver his order on time. The story of how he did this, as well as many of his other well known plant "inventions" such as the shasta daisy, the Burbank potato, and the spineless cactus which is busily making over the cattle industry, is told most entertainingly in the volume "The Harvest of the Years" (Houghton Mifflin), written by Burbank himself with the aid of his journalistic friend Wilbur Hall.

A delightful book, "dedicated to the great army of Junk Snappers whose ardor and zeal are perpetuating our traditions", is "The Junk Snapper" (Macmillan) by C. R. Clifford. In it are tall tales of antique collecting, some of them involving huge sums, which should fire the imaginations of those few Americans who are not yet engaged in collecting anything, be it weather vanes or Duncan Phyfe tables. Many of the stories must be familiar to antique hunters, for they are of the very fibre of the collecting tradition. But they make jolly reading, anyway, which is more than can be said of many of the tomes compiled by experts who confine themselves to technical information.

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