

Edgar Allan Poe. From the moment that the major clue is unearthed—to wit, the basic charge in the indictment of Jesus that he had frequently used the phrase “three days” in a sense which rendered him liable to be put to death both as a sorcerer and a blasphemer—the circumstances mobilize and march, by their own inherent psychological necessity, unswervingly and inevitably, on and on, until they deploy before a conquered Tomb with this blazon upon their banners, “The third day He arose again from the dead”.

This is a rare book. It illuminates the central mystery of existence. He is not to be envied who can read it without a thrill. For those who have not beforehand committed themselves to a refusal to believe, it kindles a beacon of eternal hope.

HOWARD DUFFIELD

THE CRITICAL YEAR by *Howard K. Beale* (HARCOURT, BRACE. \$3.75)

THE assistant professor of history in Bowdoin College has added another volume to the considerable number issued of late dealing with Reconstruction and endeavoring to furbish up Andrew Johnson, who of all presidents drew the least reputation from the office. The author really tells his whole story in these compact observations: “He was the nominal head of a party of which he was not a member, and to whose machinery his enemies held the keys. In a country controlled by victorious Northerners, his Southern origin and training made his successful execution of any policy as impossible as it made his formation of a wise one feasible. Accident of war had thrown him into the vice-presidency and a second chance into the executive chair at the head of a Northern party, in which men like Stevens and Sumner were his lieutenants and New England abolitionists a power. His leadership of this party was obviously impossible”. Professor Beale refrains from naming the party which, at the moment, was a bit difficult to specify.

Johnson had been nominated along with Lincoln by a “Union” party. The crowd he was in conflict with revived the Republican party of 1856 and 1860. Herein lay the crux. The “Union” party idea was thrown into the discard and something partisan and corrupt came in its stead. The reconstruction of the Republican party was placed in front of the reconstruction of the Union. Tragedies followed and with them the wreck of Andrew Johnson’s administration. The book deals only with the beginnings of the mess, covering the period between the death of Lincoln and the election of 1866, which brought with it a congressional majority hostile to the President, making the remainder of his stay hopeless so far as accomplishment went. Professor Beale would put some of the situation upon economics but his logic fails to hold. The purchase of a protective tariff by Northern industries followed the Reconstruction disturbances when it was found that the Negro vote in the South was not to be permitted to remain a Republican asset. The dollars of the manufacturers then became the backbone of the party. Much intelligent research and correctness in conclusions are shown. Also too great a preponderance of foot-notes.

DON C. SEITZ

THE DRAMA IN ENGLISH by *Walter Pritchard Eaton* (SCRIBNER’S. \$2.00)

THE ONE ACT PLAY by *Marvin Theodore Herrick* (UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH PRESS. \$.60)

A TEXT-BOOK on the evolution of the English and American theatre, *The Drama in English* covers about one thousand years of the drama considered as a living entity, placing particular stress on the physical aspect of playhouses at successive periods, and their resultant influence on dramatic construction.

Mr. Eaton’s research into the development of the theatre and his deductions therefrom are of considerable interest and constitute the

chief merit of the book. He traces the progress of the acted play through the earliest representations of "Mysteries" first as part of ritual within the church, and later staged on the steps outside; through "Moralities" given at fairs, in market places and at street corners, and the more secular "Interludes" played on wagons; through the Elizabethan theatre, built like an inn-yard with galleries, pit and jutting-out stage; through the picture-stage with scenic effects, borrowed from the Court Masques, and, finally, the proscenium arch; through the little houses of the Restoration, and the enormous, dimly-lit theatres of the eighteenth century and half of the nineteenth, to the intimate playhouse again in the late nineteenth and twentieth; culminating in our own modern theatres, equipped at all points to meet the demands of contemporary plays and playgoers.

Sufficient history is introduced to illuminate the trends of the various epochs, the temper of audiences and the place of dramatists in society; and representative plays are carefully analyzed for plot, construction, style, characterization and historical significance.

Some irrelevant emphasis is placed on the economic aspect, since playwriting is an art, not a business, and the book is strewn with questionable generalizations. Mr. Eaton is complacent as to the intellectual renaissance of the theatre of late years and impressed by the intelligent demands of modern audiences. It can only be by a giant effort of will that so acute a student of men and plays refuses to see that, no matter in what age, an audience can be carried away by any illusion and any technique if they are sufficiently well done; and that, so far as the re-birth of the drama goes, for all the sunburst of Shaw and the Independent Theatre, our leading dramatists are lost in fatiguing mazes, and the puppets of the well-made play have merely given place to those of the pseudo-psychologists.

Mr. Herrick's ten radio talks on *The One Act Play* explore foreign fields and profitably

display the contribution of Scandinavia, France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Spain, Italy and Russia to the theatre of to-day.

In examining the dramatic scope and structural flexibility of the one-act play, as seen at its greatest in the varied excellence of Strindberg, Maeterlinck, Synge, Schnitzler and O'Neill, Mr. Herrick demonstrates that the one-act play is not a truncated three-act play, on which to cut the playwriting teeth, but a form complete in itself and capable of reaching the heights of comedic perfection or tragic power.

OLGA KATZIN

THE LOVE LETTERS OF ERNST HAECKEL arranged by Johannes Werner (HARPER. \$3.00)

ERNST HAECKEL was nearing sixty-five and Franziska von Altenhausen was thirty when she wrote the letter that was to result in the charming and tragic correspondence now so excellently edited for the first time. A new world had arisen for her as a result of reading the great naturalist's work. She lived in a lonely, old castle with aristocratic and orthodox relatives, to whom he would be but a "middle-class atheist". She aspired to his mental milieu. Would he help her reach it? Haeckel responded readily. He lived in an unhappy home, headed by a neurasthenic, invalid wife. Eventually the two met. Passion flared, and the "old Faust" grew young again. But Franziska was no Marguerite. She admitted that she loved him, but she had standards, by which she lived. He agreed to abide by them. She was a "sweet, radiant fairy who brings fragrant blossoms to the dungeon of a poor, lonely captive", but he was a "sensual realist", he confessed. It was impossible for him to visit her as she suggested and not make love to her. "With this emotional vitality I am to sit, quiet and cool, beside an adorable girl who loves me ardently, and in whom I find embodied all the charms of sweet womanhood—impos-