

BOOKS ABROAD

Modern France. A Companion to French Studies. Edited by Arthur Tilley, M.A. Cambridge: The University Press, 1922. 35s.

[*Manchester Guardian*]

A BOOK with so vast a plan must needs be dealt with cursorily. Written by specialists, an adequate criticism of it would be the work of a syndicate. Twenty-two writers are concerned in its construction, eight English, fourteen French, most of them professors; and its nearly nine hundred pages cover four centuries, recording the progress of history, civil and ecclesiastical, the army, navy, economic and social life, finance, law, education and learning, literature, architecture, painting, sculpture and decorative art, music, the stage, philosophy, mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, optics, electricity, and radioactivity.

Whether the plan be as good as it has been difficult to carry out — and we read Mr. Tilley's account of the difficulties with sympathy — is a matter on which opinions may differ. Students will assuredly find it useful as a book of reference, though it is more and less than that. As such, it is bound to be accounted incomplete, for all its fullness, since it is not an encyclopædia. The work aims not only at recording achievements but at providing ready-made judgments for the student. Unity or proportion cannot be expected where a score of writers share responsibility; but when we consider that the historical section extends from the War of Religion to the separation of Church and State, the literary chapters from Marot to Péguy and Claudel, the scientific from Descartes to the Curies, and those on art from the Clouets to the Cubists, the book must be declared a marvel and a triumph for the editor, to whom it must have been a desperate undertaking.

The Old Country, by Ernest Rhys. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1922. 4s. 6d.

[*English Review*]

THIS capital little book 'of the love and praise of England' was, Mr. Rhys tells us, originally designed and produced to delight the men at the front with some of the atmosphere of home. It is a scrapbook gathered together from the writings of those — not all Englishmen — who from the spacious days down to Rupert Brooke have had noble, pleasant, and descriptive things to say of English ideals and the English countryside. Mr. Rhys has added to his original idea and produced a banquet of hors d'œuvre very unlike a solid British meal, but for that very reason admirable. The essence of the thing is here, the

sweet savor from many splendid feasts to set the mouth watering for more; so for those who like refreshment between meals, as well as for the many who have no time to take solid nourishment, this book of excerpts is excellent, if only as a remembrance of the passion of desire with which millions languished in France and Flanders and elsewhere.

It is a book of unusual interest, and the pictures are as apt to the purpose as the rest of the bill of fare — fine confused eating they, too. Herbert Railton's elegant observations of historical buildings and places, stylish bits of the essentially British H. M. Brock, color plates of a post-cardy sweetness all extraordinarily English, with everything handsome and nothing high-brow about them. A scrapbook, in short, very likable to all but the superior person, and just the sort of book for a hungry Tommy or that still hungrier youth which lacks the education of duty, discipline, and delight.

The Press and the Organization of Society, by Norman Angell. London: Labor Publishing Co., 1922. 3s. 6d.

[C. M. Lloyd in *London Mercury*]

MR. NORMAN ANGELL's little book is a very able discussion of a profoundly important problem. The Press is clearly one of the most powerful instruments in the modern State, and, equally clearly, its exercise of its power is full of mischief. The popular newspaper of to-day can, and does, poison the public mind with lies; it can, and does, debase the public mind with twaddle. The fault does not lie merely, as some naïve souls appear to think, in the dominance of the advertiser with his 'all-deafening blast of Puffery,' nor in the naughtiness of 'capitalist proprietors.' Socialists have proved that they too know how to employ the device of 'selection and emphasis of news.' Nor is the solution of the problem, as Mr. Angell shows, to be found in such simple schemes as a State monopoly or 'Truthful Press Acts' or the signing of all articles.

The most hopeful line of reform is to make journalism 'a chartered profession like those of Law and Medicine, demanding certain qualifications and adherence to a certain code of professional conduct' — and then, perhaps, to set up one or more journals as a State Press, not, of course managed by the Government, but by a 'journalistic judiciary,' pledged to the impartial presentation of the news. If the journalist is allowed to save his own soul, he may save the public's. Mr. Angell offers some wise advice to the Labor movement on the question of how to es-

tablish a decent Press of its own. But he is not very optimistic. The Trade Unions and Coöperative Societies, as he observes truly enough, have yet to learn how to combine democracy and efficiency.

The Public Library, by E. A. Baker, D. Litt.
London: O'Connor, 1922. 12s. 6d.

[*The Nation and the Athenæum*]

THIS book is timely. Interest in the Public Library movement is growing. Dr. Baker, in a convenient compass, gives a history of the movement, the present situation in town and country areas, and the ideals, which remain to be realized, of the foremost librarians. Books are no longer the monopoly of a class. The day is passing — perhaps has passed — when every country seat had at least a library which might rival that of Leonora about which Addison wrote so pleasingly. Penury, with possibly suppressed culture, is the hallmark of modern aristocracy. The people are getting the libraries. This is a necessary sequence from national education. To teach the nation to read is to create a demand for reading matter. Hence the affirmation of the Philosophic Radicals (those logical redeemers) of the right of every citizen to an elementary education, paved the way for Cobden and others to agitate for the provision of library facilities. . . .

Dr. Baker would have added to the value of his book, therefore, had he devoted a chapter specifically to the books in a library. A censorship is one solution, but prohibition is no cure. Expurgated editions are the work of the Evil One, and, that being so, the position of the librarian involves grave responsibility. The only enduring solution is the creation of a finer taste — an instinct for the best — among future readers. No wonder there is an increase of interest to-day in the despised Victorian writers! Perhaps they lacked courage and fenced morality in a crinoline; but anyway they are not both warm and furtive.

In future editions of this book the syntax should be revised in one or two places. The matter of a library with a museum adjunct, with cross references between the two, is also worth consideration. More illustrations of municipal libraries should be given. The photograph of the Stepney Library is the only one which shows the people actually getting at the books. The other illustrations — of the King's Library, Lambeth Palace Library, the Oratory Library, and so on — lack human interest; the loaded and abandoned shelves rather give point to the old sneer of a library being a place where books are housed but not used. Dr. Baker's book as it stands, however, will render good service if it can be got into the hands of municipal authorities.

The Lute of Darkness, by S. Matthewman.
Leeds: The Swan Press, 1922. 1s.

[*New Witness*]

THIS is a short book, but it has the mark of a graceful maturity. Mr. Matthewman handles the sober iambic metres with musical assurance: both his sonnets and his blank verse stand well finished and leave a pleasing echo in the mind. In fact, this poetry has the true quality of all good poetry, in that it produces echoes: the author says rather less than he means, and the mind of the reader is set brooding and meditating. The long poem on a modern theme, 'When You Are Out,' has already appeared in the *Chapbook*, and in its curious gravity and distilled sense of human values rather reminds one of the Unanimistes.

[A sonnet from this book appears on A Page of Verse.]

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BOOKS ANNOUNCED

THE London *Sunday Times* notes an interesting addition to the flood of Stevensoniana: 'We are promised a book of unusual interest. R. L. Stevenson's mother kept a diary in which she recorded his history as a baby, and it is to be published in facsimile in a limited edition of 500 copies.' The publishers are not named.

MARCHANT, SIR JAMES (Editor). *The Coming Renaissance*. London: Kegan Paul and Co. A group of writers who include Lady Frances Balfour, Professor Patrick Geddes, and Professor J. Arthur Thomson write from various points of view, including those of workers in science, religion, politics, education, finance, and literature.

MEYNELL, ALICE. *Collected Poems*. London: Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, 1923. A definitive edition, containing a good deal of later work that has not yet appeared in book form. The hitherto uncollected work will also be published separately as *Last Poems of Alice Meynell*.

WRIGHT, F. A. *Feminism in Greek Literature*. London: George Routledge and Son, 1923. Advances the theory that most Greek writers were misogynists. Euripides, Plato, and Aristophanes are honorable exceptions.

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BOOKS MENTIONED

CAMPBELL, ETHEL. *From a Durban Window*. Privately printed, 1922.

UGARTE, MANUEL. *Mi Campaña Hispano-Americana*. Barcelona: Editorial Cervantes, 1922.

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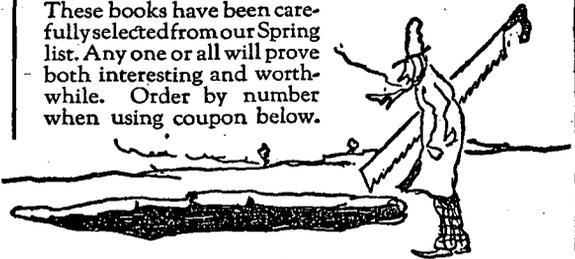
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