

## BOOKS ABROAD

*The International Anarchy, 1904-1914*, by G. Lowes Dickinson. London: Allen and Unwin; New York: The Century Company. \$3.50.

[C. E. M. Joad in the *Daily Herald*]

In reviewing C. E. Montague's novel, *Rough Justice*, 'Phi' remarked on the curious coincidence that the only two books about the war which will live — one a novel and the other a book of memoirs (those of Colonel House) — had appeared within the same week. Had he read *The International Anarchy* he might have made his coincidence still more striking by adding a third, for, as a survey of the causes which led to the late war, Lowes Dickinson's book is likely to become a classic. Setting out to accomplish two different objects, it succeeds triumphantly in both. In the first place it gives us a survey of the foreign policies of the Great Powers in the thirty years that preceded the Great War. The method here is purely historical. Picking his way through a maze of treaties, dispatches, conferences, private letters, and public pronouncements, the writer presents us with a coherent plan of the innumerable strands that were woven into the complex fabric of European diplomacy.

As the narrative reaches the three weeks before war came, the interest grows, although, in the writer's view, their importance has been overstressed. Mr. Lowes Dickinson even apologizes for continuing the narrative up to the outbreak of war: 'For years the States of Europe have been drifting down the rapids of their own purposes and passions. They have now reached Niagara, and at this point we might arrest our study without any loss to the truth we are driving home.'

For it is not to be supposed that Mr. Lowes Dickinson has undertaken this onerous task from sheer disinterested pleasure in historical research. He wishes to point a moral and to teach a lesson, and the lesson is this: The war was not due to the peculiar wickedness of any man, men, country, or group of countries, but to the existence of a system. This system, which the author calls the international anarchy, is that of independent, armed States whose foreign policy is inspired by the single motive of as much self-aggrandizement as is compatible with self-security. It is the fact that each State plays for its own hand every time and all the time, the one restraining consideration being fear of other States, which

convicts all aspirations for peace and disarmament of fundamental insincerity, makes the object of a European conference the concerting of a crime that every member has an equal interest in committing, and that of armaments the rendering your enemy more afraid of you than you are of your enemy.

Mr. Lowes Dickinson shows the hypocrisy of the plea that armaments are required for defense by pointing out that if no State maintained armaments there could be no need of armaments on the part of other States to protect themselves against armaments that do not exist. State A urges that its armaments are for defense; but no other State believes it. State B does not believe it; therefore State B establishes armaments to protect itself against State A. State A must then increase its armaments to protect itself against the new menace from B. State B then — and so on *ad infinitum*.

I hope that young men now growing to maturity will read this book. I do not see how it is possible to deny its conclusions, or how, accepting them, to continue to support the system of international lunacy that is again already under way.

*The Sacred Tree*, by Lady Murasaki. Being the Second Part of *The Tale of Genji*. Translated from the Japanese by Arthur Waley. London: Allen and Unwin; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. \$3.50.

[*Times Literary Supplement*]

THE second of the six volumes in which Mr. Waley has promised to give us the whole of *The Tale of Genji* does not fail to confirm the impression made by the first. The Lady Murasaki's work, written at the commencement of the eleventh century, is clearly one of the great pieces of fiction. The skill and grace of Mr. Waley's translation are evident enough; the prose of this second volume is a constant delight. At the request of some of his readers Mr. Waley has added an introduction, which is both illuminating and witty, dealing with fiction in Japan before Murasaki and with her methods as a novelist.

The first volume left off at Genji's second marriage with the niece of Fujitsubo. The second opens with his final parting from Rokujo, his former mistress; and the first few pages immedi-

ately give us a taste of Murasaki's quality as a novelist. It is not merely their vitality and their outward freedom of expression — rarities in the whole of Japanese literature — that hold the reader; it is the combination of that un-Japanese freedom with a sensibility as delicate and as surprising as can easily be found in Japanese lyric poetry. Genji's sentiments are stirred and his passion is revived by the parting; from embarrassment and indifference the lovers pass to a last tender enchantment, which is followed in turn by regrets and tears. The whole scene bears a truthfulness, lifted to poetry by the exchange of simple but almost sacramental verses, that lays bare the humanity and the living romance beneath the formal texture of the narrative. Not mere literary convention, but the depth and refinement of Murasaki's art, produce a symmetry of mood and incident in which each imaginative detail appears as an intricate pattern. The moon, the starlit sky, dawn, autumn flowers, a trail of wisteria blossom, the incense of cloves and sandalwood, the evening mist, snow on the trees, 'the mournful fluting of the wind in the pines' — these serve not merely to reveal the novelist's delight in nature, but to heighten the beauty and dignify the adventure she evokes in the very human and rather frustrated lives of her characters.

*Odtaa*, by John Masefield. London: Heinemann; New York: The Macmillan Company. \$2.50.

[*Morning Post*]

MR. JOHN MASEFIELD has certainly hit upon new ideas for fiction in *Odtaa*, the scene of which is laid in a Latin-American republic called Santa Barbara, the political and economic geography thereof being described in the first chapter. It is a State still in the stage of revolutionary politics, where bullets are ballots, and the spoils go to the victors, and a Government, if it feels itself strong enough, may try to wipe out the Opposition. Reds versus Whites in Santa Barbara has resulted in favor of the former, the Clerical and Conservative Party lacking a strong man to lead it either in peace or war, and the Dictator, López Zubiaga, who is the head of the Radical and anti-Clerical Party, is preparing the annihilation of his opponents. He goes mad, and becomes more than a second Caligula, demanding to be worshiped as God Almighty — 'thy God López' — in the churches and cathedrals. A tremendous personality, evil through and through, who will remind the student of South American history of a real López, Dictator in Paraguay, whose maniacal wars brought about the almost complete destruction of the male population in his oppressed country!

Highworth Ridden ('Hi' throughout the story) is a young Englishman with a genius for engineering, sent by his father, who hates railway-builders and the like, to Santa Barbara to sink or swim. He has no sooner arrived in the capital of the State than he is caught in the political maelstrom.



[E. O. Hoppé in the *Bookman*]

He undertakes a difficult and dangerous journey, through a country where the 'Inglays with cat-tripes' is detested, to take news of the imprisonment of a wonderful girl, Carlotta, to her lover, Manuel, the last descendant of the Conquistador, who afterward becomes the benign ruler of Santa Barbara. His adventures as a knight-errant form the substance of an exciting narrative, which justifies the title of the story ('One Damned Thing after Another,' from the American humorist's definition of life). He fails, and the divine Carlotta is done to death, like many other notable men and women of the White Party. Carlotta is an impressive creation, and we should like to have seen more of her. That is the weak point of a story which challenges comparison with Conrad's *Nostromo*. López and Carlotta and Manuel, the personages in whom we are most deeply interested, are thrust into the background as soon as we have met them. Yet the novel — it is called so in a quite unnecessary subtitle — insists on being read at a sitting, and contains many powerful and poetic passages which only Mr. Masefield could have written.

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#### BOOKS MENTIONED

*The Letters of Sir Walter Raleigh*. Edited by Lady Raleigh. New York: The Macmillan Company. 2 vols. \$7.00.

## OUR OWN BOOKSHELF

**Sixty-Four, Ninety-Four! The Crime at Vanderlynden's**, by R. H. Mottram. New York: The Dial Press. 1925-26. \$2.50 each.

ONE must begin by recalling the first of Mr. Mottram's war trilogy, *The Spanish Farm*, supplying as it does in form and substance the key to what follows. In the earlier book *Madeleine Vanderlynden*, a French peasant, wrests from the fortunes of war the preservation of herself and her home. Strong of purpose, cool and acquisitive, she toils, behind the lines, in Paris and in Amiens, and eventually on the very brink of the trenches, compromising when necessary, but never relinquishing her primary love of her man and her land. Such an existence, superficially observed by many, has been seldom understood with such comprehension as Mr. Mottram's. Of the book Mr. Galsworthy has found 'chronicle' to be the best single description. A chronicle, then, of the French peasant in war, subject as needs be to the occasional whim of fiction.

The form and some of this substance is reproduced in the second book, *Sixty-Four, Ninety-Four!* Here is the saga of the civilian soldiery. As the shadow of Lieutenant Geoffrey Skene, formerly an architect, we meet those sturdy Englishmen recruited from 'varsity, professions, and business who fused their strength in Kitchen's mob; we share the experiences of an officer in and out of the line, at Divisional Headquarters and on leave, each character, each episode, veritable and so 'composite' that a veteran may read into them his own identifications and recognize reality.

The fact that the *Spanish Farm* lay in a sector occupied by the English links this chronicle with its predecessor, affords an opportunity for a vicarious and rather doubtful friendship between *Madeleine* and Skene, and enables us to see with the Lieutenant's eyes further evidence of her — and France's — tenacious integrity. Add to this Skene's philosophy, honest and typical, and we have in the two volumes a personal and picturesque record of these peoples at war. The *raison d'être* of the third volume, *The Crime at Vanderlynden's*, is far to seek. It is partially apparent when the author unravels the confused incident with which the chronicle begins and

brings into sharp, deliberate contrast the conflicting temperaments of the French and English allies.

A trivial act of sacrilege — its description a masterly passage — is committed at the *Spanish Farm*, and the Vanderlyndens' prompt complaint, passing through innumerable bureaux, gathers sufficient red tape to involve one officer for the duration and eventually to force itself upon both G. H. Q.'s and the French Chamber. For this second purpose, this thrust at officialdom, Lieutenant Dormer is made the protagonist. Formerly a bank clerk, he proves a gray, automatic fellow whose introspection is oddly out of place. Chiefly he is valuable for his presence in certain distinctive pictures, delicious for their irony. But his shortcomings strain the narrative and bring to light flaws hitherto concealed; the record becomes monotonous, the course of war incoherent, the criticism of High Command supercilious.

Carping aside, veterans will read all the books and be thankful, but generally what remains in mind is the admirable, living fact of *Madeleine* in the midst of her English defenders.

**My Apprenticeship**, by Beatrice Webb. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1926. \$5.00.

BORN into the family of a great Victorian industrialist and freethinker, brought up to take her place in the London society of the seventies and eighties, Beatrice Potter turned the tables on her manifest destiny by becoming a sociological investigator, a statistician, and the wife of one of the foremost English Socialists. In this 'spiritual autobiography' she records her experiences down to the time when, in her early thirties, she met and married Sidney Webb. It is a story of resolute struggle to understand a bewildering environment and to find a personal rôle to play in it. Engaging as it is on its purely private side, and animated as it is with portraits of some of her eminent contemporaries, — of whom Herbert Spencer was the chief, both in worldly fame and in personal influence, — *My Apprenticeship* is primarily interesting as the story of an important intellectual era seen through the eyes of one of its leading actors.