

LIFE, LETTERS, AND THE ARTS

Alert Japan

RECENT advices from Japan indicate that California's fear of the Yellow Peril should be transferred from political to intellectual fields. Not that the nation is politically inactive. Her Commission for Cultural Work in the East has just put through an agreement with the Chinese that governs the expenditure of the proceeds of the Boxer Indemnity. Our own country's policy toward China in regard to the money due us on the same indemnity was so successful that others have taken it up in various ways. Japan has seen fit to follow closely in our footsteps, and arrange for the education in Japan of a certain number of Chinese each year in order to inculcate the germs of Sino-Japanese friendship. But the Chinese have been suspicious. Various European nations will be disgusted to learn that the Chinese felt that America was really prompted by generosity when she educated Chinese students on indemnity money. Until we offer free courses in Home Economics at our co-educational universities to indigent Frenchmen, this suspicion is likely to flourish.

The Japanese, however, have succeeded in putting through an agreement which sets up a committee in Peking composed of ten Japanese and eleven Chinese, who administer the cash. Under an editorial entitled 'Buying Chinese Friendship,' the *Japan Advertiser*, an American daily published in Tokyo, says that China looks suspiciously at the whole affair; but the fact remains that the agreement went through.

When the youthful Chinese student comes to Japan to complete his education he will be installing himself in the country that, next to Germany, publishes more books a year than any other. The Osaka *Mainichi* announces that during last year 18,028 books appeared in Japan — an increase of four thousand over the year before. In 1924 German books ran to nearly 36,000, but this number includes some that were distributed in Austria. In the same year Britain published 12,000, a record for that country, and the United States but 6380. This, however, was less than usual for us. At all events, these figures show that Japan is a nation of eager readers, and, as long as her 18,000 books are better than some 6370 of ours, the Chinese students are to be envied their opportunity.

But the most cheering news of all from Japan is the statement by Dr. Dansui, just back in France after three years of archæology in Indo-China, to the effect that the first settlers of the Asiatic mainland were members of the Caucasian race. Dr. Torii, a Tokyo authority on the same subject, was so pleased to hear this that he promptly announced that the Ainu race that originally settled in Japan is white too. He quotes, but does not name, a British authority who states that the Ainus came from New Guinea to their present home. There is, too, a possibility that Indo-Chinese Caucasians may be linked with the presumably white primitives of Australia. Dr. Torii boggles at Dr. Dansui's argument, for it seems to hinge on a copper drum used in Indo-China. This kind of drum is said to be the infallible earmark of a Mongol.

What the Japanese hope is that these researches may show some connection between the Causasians of Indo-China and the ancient Ainus. They are to be congratulated if they think that proof of this would change Hiram Johnson's convictions on the immigration laws. Such hopefulness is all too rare in our dreary world.

New German Pedagogics

HAVING set the standard in higher education, Germany is beginning to turn to the earlier years in the lives of her young people. To the credit of the nation it may be said that the Montessori system did not lift its head until 1924, but since then the fad has gained momentum, and is becoming the first step in a bewildering process. The *Berliner Tageblatt* quotes from five experts in the field of lower education, and they all agree on the necessity of giving the student more of a voice in the administration of his own affairs. Paula Fürst describes her Montessori class, in which the children can move their desks about as they please and study whatever suits their fancy. Although furious at the idea of standardization and specialization, apologists for this method may soon point with equanimity and even pride to one youngster who is well along in the differential calculus but who cannot spell his name, and to another who is in the middle of the second volume of Spengler but who thinks that New York is in Palestine. When the German youth has been thoroughly Montessoried he then has his choice of several schools, for in this new day of infant self-expression parents are not entitled to butt in on something they know so little about.

All of the 'new pedagogues,' as they are called, believe in student self-determination. An institution on the island of Scharfenberg is run on the following

principles: (1) common efforts in field, garden, and workshop; (2) simplicity, not as a stop-gap, but as a virtue in itself; (3) close attention to health, dress, and nourishment; (4) self-government as the best school for self-reliance; (5) latitude of choice as the principle of all scientific work; (6) opposition to all Americanism.

The sixth item is no doubt intended as a protest against the American cult that is so popular now in Germany, and presumably has no political significance. The only institution that keeps any of the old flavor is the school at Schloss Salem founded by Prince Max von Baden in 1920. Believing that the need of the hour was for young people who could cope with the moral collapse into which the Fatherland had sunk after the war, Max decided that the best thing he could do would be to found a school. He tries to inculcate by means of sport the most adamant resistance to all that is base. He does not, however, believe in the English idea of putting sport above everything else. He devotes certain afternoons to handicraft, and others to group activities. The idea of self-government is here as elsewhere, but at least it works on schedule.

The Decline of the Harem

THE harem is following the fez down the pathway of oblivion. In the Palace of the Old Seraglio at Stamboul the bijou apartments of the Chief of the Black Slaves of the harem and the Schoolroom of the Princes are being opened to profane inspection under the management of the Constantinople Direction of Museums. Other imperial buildings, long in a state of decay, are being overhauled. The most marvelous of these is the former Treasury, where robes, headdresses, and gems of bygone Sultans will soon be on display. Al-

ready one can wander through five or six kiosks and audience rooms, including the Cupola of the Divan, the Sultan's old audience room with its huge canopied sofa for the Grand Vizier, the 'New Kiosk' overlooking the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmora. Frock-coated officials are stationed at frequent intervals among these gaudy remains.

The most interesting exhibit at present is the apartment of the Chief of the Black Slaves. This pampered individual could warm his toes at one of the finest tiled fireplaces in the Palace, and when he lay late abed could contemplate a ceiling tiled with valuable faience. In contrast to his sumptuous quarters are the cells in which his unfortunate subordinates dwelt. They inhabited a three-story barracks, and were shut up in tiny compartments with spy-holes for their chiefs to look through. On a wall of this building still hangs an instrument of chained wood which was twisted around their feet when their mistresses ordered them to be bastinadoed.

Distressing as it is to think of these fine old institutions being reduced to the level of museums, the fate of the Yildiz Palace is even more gruesome. The finest of all the imperial kiosks, which was built by Abdul Hamid for a visit of the German Emperor, has been turned into a municipal casino. Under heavily gilded ceilings, behind doors encrusted with mother-of-pearl, Levantine Babbitts will gamble away their shrewdly earned cash. Only non-Turkish citizens will be allowed to play at the table — a rule which is calculated to give the place the highest possible social tone. For the real spendthrift the attractions of night life at its jazziest will be spread forth. A European ballet corps and a Negro band are being specially imported. Perhaps these black men and white women will lead lives so

much like their predecessors of similar hues that history will repeat itself after all.

Sitwells and the Stage

EVERY so often the Sitwell family succeeds in lodging itself in the public eye. Their most recent exploit was the work of Brother Osbert, who remarked, 'The stage is in so deplorable a condition that, so far as I can see, the importance of broadcasting cannot be too strongly emphasized. Actors and actresses are so busy trying to be ladies and gentlemen and golfers that they have no time left to pay attention to their jobs.' Although this sounds to most of us like the most obvious platitude, it did not strike Mr. Robert Hale that way. Mr. Hale is a music-hall comedian, and the proud father of Sonnie and Binnie Hale. This trio had accepted an invitation of the British Broadcasting Company to appear in a radio fantasy called 'The Wheel of Time,' written by the three Sitwells. Everything was in readiness, when Osbert innocently made his 'impertinent and insolent attack on the entire theatrical profession,' as Mr. Hale's manager put it. Speaking for his impressionable children as well as for himself, Mr. Hale felt that there was no alternative but to withdraw from the entertainment. Furthermore, Mr. Hale refused to read the lines which the Sitwells had written for him — a state of mind that led Brother Osbert to remark: —

'A well-known comedian was approached to recite some of the poems in this performance of ours, but he said he could not do so because he might be thought foolish. Surely the opinion of a comedian is not to be taken so seriously as that. In no other country in the world would such things be tolerated.'

Mr. Hale then came far enough out

in the open to admit, 'It may sound a terrible confession, but when I was lunching with them [the Sitwells] recently and attempting to converse with them I could not understand half they were talking about. It was such high-brow stuff that I, who am not a poet, but only an actor, was very often altogether at sea.'

Brother Sacheverell pronounced the last word:—

'It is all most distressing. There is some sort of conspiracy against the family. Many people have said much harder things about the stage than Osbert did, and no notice has been taken of it, but when a Sitwell says them it is looked upon as a very dreadful affair. It is time some of these stage people were taught a lesson, and if they are not careful they will get one of a more severe character than Osbert has given them.'

Dreiser in Berlin

UNDER the title of 'Theodore Dreiser and His Victory,' Herman George Scheffauer, writing in *Die Literarische Welt*, praised the author of *An American Tragedy* during his recent visit to Berlin. Scheffauer's own work frequently appears in American reviews, and he last saw Dreiser in New York, when the latter was employed on the staff of the *Delineator*. Herr Scheffauer speaks of Dreiser's long fight for his ideals, and concludes that he is at last successful, since he has made a great deal of money. This, however, is no news to American readers, and the part of the article that is of most interest to us is the reference to Dreiser's German blood.

It took, of course, '*unser Kritiker* H. L. Mencken' to discover the man in the first place, and to rank his work as superior to that of Thomas Mann and other German writers with whom he

had a good deal in common. That Dreiser himself was overcome by yearning for his spiritual home is indicated from the following words of Herr Scheffauer's:—

'A week ago I stood with Dreiser and a friend in the black smoky cellar of E. T. A. Hoffmann's drinking establishment. Little groups of *Wandervögel* played and sang German songs. Dreiser was spellbound with pleasure. He listened to them with delight and devotion; his face shone radiantly, his eyes were moist. The poor fellow had encountered some of the German soul, and an old feeling of sympathy welled up within him. In this greatest American realist German blood brooded and stirred. In all his heavy, vast, tediously erected and assembled, monumental works one motive dominated all others—his search for the soul of his people. The result of this search is that to-day the idea of suffering is the hallmark of modern American literature. And from this agony a soul will be born and the goal will be attained.'

Although Herr Scheffauer feels that Dreiser has reached the summit of his genius, he does not believe that the work is completed. Puritanism, prejudices, and false romanticism must be made to knuckle under. Mencken is called upon to belabor the 'Yankee-Philistine,' Lewis to bait the Babbitts, Masters and Anderson to assault the hicks. Hergesheimer is urged to do something about the war. The call has been sounded. Who will reply?

The Last Word on Channel Swimming

MR. WILLIAM HENRY has spoken. The chief secretary and founder of the Royal Life-Saving Society has aired his views on the Channel-swimming contagion from which Western civilization has recently been suffering. As if eleven or twelve hours in the sea were not

enough, Mr. Henry does not hesitate to throw more cold water on the cowering figures of the new record-breakers. He suggests that in Vierkotter's case no details were known, and cynically points to the fact that he went right back to France. Anyone who sets foot in England only to return at once to another country must surely be a suspicious character.

In spite of the fact that no English person had swum the Channel since 1911, Mr. Henry felt that British swimmers are as good as the foreigners over long distances, though Americans excel in the sprints. Luck alone, he says, has prevented Englishmen from duplicating recent foreign feats. Mr. Henry does not think much of the crawl, and says that, although Vierkotter, Trudy, and Mrs. Corson all claim they used it, they are talking through their bathing caps.

'The real object of swimming should be life-saving,' he announces, 'and for this the crawl is more than useless. Obviously you cannot carry anyone while using the crawl. Anyway, the statement that Vierkotter, Miss Ederle, and Mrs. Corson used the crawl all the way is probably incorrect. If they had done so they could not have been fed, they could not have rested, and they would have been soon fatigued.'

Mr. Henry explains Miss Ederle's and Mrs. Corson's triumphs on the ground that women can stay in the water longer than men. Frank Perks, of Birmingham, said he could have got across if he had had someone in his launch to tell him where to go. This sounds reasonable. The most interesting of Mr. Henry's comments is to the effect that every three years the tides in the Channel are favorable: Burgess crossed in 1911; twelve years later three more came through; and three years after that five more have succeeded. If meteorologists become interested,

this strenuous sport may lead to something even more valuable than vaudeville contracts.

Religion versus Science

FOR the past few months the pages of *Figaro* have been enlivened by a discussion as to whether or not there is a fundamental opposition between religion and science. The origins of the dispute, as far as France — a synonym for civilization — is concerned, date back to the eighteenth-century Encyclopædists. Later, in 1820, Comte detected the spiritual possibilities of science, and some time after Renan said that Claude Bernard pursued his scientific work 'as if he were performing the duties of a priest celebrating a sort of sacrifice.' Taine remarked: 'In this use of science and in this conception of things there are politics, art, morality, and a new kind of religion.' Fifty years ago, according to *Figaro*, people were saying, 'No more need of morality or religion. Science will supply everything. It will be the religion of the future.'

Nowadays we are whistling a different tune. The conception of Science with a capital S is old-fashioned, and we believe only in the scientific method. Abbé Moreux, head of the observatory at Bourges, puts it this way: 'The confines of science and religion are rigidly fixed, and the objections that scholars raise against our dogma will never transcend the narrow confines that limit them.'

Others involved in the *Figaro* investigation came to similar conclusions. One said that geological discoveries have supported our ancient faith in God. Another believes that religious sentiments make a very valuable background for scientific research. Another has been led by science into the very arms of the spiritualists. Of the forty-

odd investigators only five or six detected any hostility between the microscope and the Mass. One of these unfortunates tried to establish a contradiction between the teachings of the Catholic Church and the account of the creation of the world as related in the first chapter of Genesis. This, he said, is typical of the errors into which religious folk are led. The most absurd of all was the man who detected in the investigation itself proof of the incompatibility of science and religion, and who announced that such conscience-searching clearly showed that religious dogma was suffering under an agonizing strain. The upshot of the matter is that civilization has officially decided to allow a personal God and a good doctor under the same roof.

The Intelligent Ant

M. CHARLES JOURDAN of Algiers has found that a kind of black ant known as the *musor barbarus*, which inhabits his part of the world, possesses extraordinary intelligence. He had placed in his garden a bowl of grain for the birds, but soon noticed that the ants were getting away with most of it. He set the bowl on several sticks, but the ants soon climbed up and carried their food down. This, however, proved a slow process, and in a short time they had established two groups of workers, one of which threw the grain down, while the other picked it up and carried it away. This not only saved a lot of labor, but made it possible for much more grain to be kept in motion, for only a few ants could go up and down the narrow sticks that supported the bowl. The next thing M. Jourdan did was to surround the elevated bowl with glue. After several ants had got their feet caught the rest gathered quantities of earth and laid a safe pathway across the glue to the sticks leading to the bowl.

Finally the bowl was placed on a tripod in a small basin of water. This baffled the ants for some time, and they wandered about the edge of the little lake quite distressed. But presently they began, in large groups, to carry twigs and bits of dead leaves and contrived to make a floating bridge to the base of one of the tripods: The most remarkable thing about this feat is that during the rainy season the ants stay underground, and they have no way of telling that twigs and dead leaves would be able to float. M. Alphonse Labitte, an attaché of the Museum in Algiers, concludes that the intelligence of insects and men differs only in degree and not in kind.

Kemal's Memoirs

OF course it may be censorship, but the fact remains that the publication of Kemal's memoirs is the chief literary event of the year in Turkey. Published in the form of interviews in that old favorite, the *Hakimietti Millié* of Angora, some of them saw the light of day last March and April, but the whole book has only just appeared. The documents it contains amount to an almost complete history of Turkey during the last twenty years, but there are also some general observations which show that the author has thoughts of his own. Here are two typical reflections:—

'If a man partakes of the convictions of those who regulate a community, and participates in the same spiritual state, he cannot escape the necessity of being a man of that community and of that milieu.'

'I know neither why nor how those impotent, feeble creatures are made who always rely on making an appeal to the pity of people stronger and more resolute than themselves and attracting their commiseration.'

BOOKS ABROAD

England, by W. R. Inge, D.D. London: Ernest Benn; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926. \$3.00.

[*Times*]

THE Dean of St. Paul's says that he has found the preparation of this book the most difficult literary task he has ever undertaken. The conditions were that it should be historical and yet look toward the future, so that, besides selecting and arranging the historical material, the author has had to assume to a certain extent the part of a seer, thus going beyond Mr. Trevelyan, with whose recent history this volume will be profitably read. Candor, but not impartiality, has been the Dean's aim; he loves his country too well not to be outspoken, and he holds it to be in great danger from 'antisocial and unpatriotic sectionalism, which is the curse of industrial civilization.' The whole work is written from this standpoint, but, though expressing strong opinions, is neither a satire nor a diatribe.

A sentence or two in the preface sums up the Dean's diagnosis of the 'chronic malaise' which makes town workers 'hate all the conditions of their lives.'

The sudden transplantation of the countryman, within three or four generations, into the unnatural surroundings of the great town has more to do with social unrest than is usually supposed. . . . The town worker does not consciously recognize the call of the country; he only feels the aching of racial habits, thousands of years old, and now suddenly thwarted.

Mr. Trevelyan was not far from saying the same; and it is not a mere coincidence that the Dean should begin his book, like Mr. Trevelyan, with a chapter on the land and its mixed racial elements, for the land is now painfully small in comparison with what it once was.

From the country we pass to the national character, on which any prediction of the future must depend; but nothing is harder than a fair estimate. Are national characters fixed? Do the same qualities rule throughout all classes? If all Englishmen are stoical, and if the Englishman in general is 'always in difficulties when he has to deal with real Machiavellianism, or with unscrupulous fanaticism,' the upper class is 'adventurous, active, ambitious, and apt for governing others,' while 'the lower class is

unenterprising, slothful, noisy, and emotional.' A 'great and sinister phenomenon' is the modern working-class docility to the orders of a junta.

There has been nothing like it in English history. It has not been possible to induce any other class in the community to submit to this kind of discipline in defense of its own interests. It is un-English; more un-English than the rather superficial Catholic revival. One thing is certain. Organization of this uncompromising and militant type is fundamentally incompatible with parliamentary government, with democracy, and with civil liberty.

The question is whether the Englishman, 'a sweet, just, boyish master,' in Mr. Santayana's words, will be able to hold his own against the 'scientific blackguards, conspirators, churls, and fanatics' arrayed against him.

What of the Empire into which the small and overcrowded island has expanded? Dr. Inge does not mince words about 'the dog-in-the-manger policy of Labor in the Dominions'; the 'almost insane malignity against England' which is the 'chief bond of union among the Irish wherever they go'; the fact that Canada's 'chief safeguard' lies in the United States' not wanting to conquer it; the absence of authority supreme in all parts of the Empire; the loss of Ireland, perhaps the 'most shameful event in English history' — the handing over of a neolithic race, as an intolerable nuisance, to its own devices, 'the insincere cant about the right of self-determination' having come 'home to roost in the British Isles.' Finally, 'the day of the amateur, with his haphazard methods is over; and this is not a good thing for England.' The Dean looks wistfully on the scientific State as it was exemplified in Germany; perhaps it is the only hope for the future, if England is to be a 'going concern.'

[J. A. Spender in the *Westminster Gazette*]

Of course, if these things are true they ought to be said and faced, but when one finds the new Jeremiahs periodically repeating the apparently refuted lamentations of the old Jeremiahs, with a confident assurance that the ruin is at last about to begin, cheerfulness, as Dr. Johnson's friend said, will break in. When the Dean speaks positively about what is going to happen a hundred years hence, or, for that matter, fifty or thirty years hence, my spirits rise and I feel a

cheerful conviction that, whatever may be going to happen, it won't be this. I feel it the more because of the little bundle of prejudices which the Dean carries about with him, and which are always getting between him and any dispassionate view of the present, let alone the future. He scatters his pages with vitriol whenever he talks of Irish, Americans, Roman Catholics, or those whom he calls comprehensively the 'lower classes.' A man is scarcely human who is not liable to one or other of these prejudices, but to have to carry the whole lot on his back together and to be obliged to dump them on his reader in the middle of otherwise informing and well-argued passages is a sad handicap to a philosophic historian. At the end one feels that if those whom the Dean calls the 'upper class' did really feel in this way it would justify a good deal of his pessimism about the disunity of the country and the future of its government and policy. How could we expect Irishmen to like to be governed by people who thought of them as he thinks, or intelligent Indians not to object to the kind of rule that he desires for them, or the 'lower classes' to submit contentedly to the rule of an 'upper class' which thinks them 'unenterprising, slothful, noisy, and emotional'?

Did the Dean, one wonders, pause a moment to reflect on the history of the last eight years before he penned that last sentence? He allows the 'lower class' some virtues in war, but apparently none at all in peace. And yet in the eight years of the peace this country has reestablished its credit, shouldered the immense burden of its debt, sustained its unemployed, and left itself a large margin to improve its standard of life and increase its pleasures. Does he really think that this could have been accomplished by a country of which the great majority (as on any definition the 'lower class' must be) are 'unenterprising, slothful, noisy, and emotional'? Does he really think, as he seems to say, that all the sacrifices have been borne by the 'upper class' alone, and that none of the taxes imposed nominally on the rich have been felt by the poor? These suppositions seem to me absurd. It has been a gigantic effort, of which an immense part has been borne by the workers, and if they had been the slothful and unenterprising people that the Dean supposes, and if they had not included among them a high proportion of the best and most enterprising workmen in the world, it could never have been accomplished. It has, of course, been accompanied by strain and friction, and at the end of it the frayed tempers of all parties present us with very serious problems. Undoubtedly we can do more and better, but one of the conditions is that we shall do justice and deal charitably with each other, and the Dean's diatribes are neither justice nor charity.

I suppose one ought not to be irritated, and all along one has the suspicion that the Dean is only doing it to annoy. He has had a certain character imposed on him in his approach to the public, and he grows like it, as Whistler said a man grows like his portrait. And yet it seems a pity that so much knowledge, so much acuteness, and a naturally philosophic temperament should be soured and thwarted in this way. Jeremy Taylor, in a passage which Lord Grey has quoted in one of his essays, speaks of the man 'who chooseth to sit upon his little handful of thorns.' I still look for the time when the Dean will get up from his little handful of thorns, which must be as uncomfortable for him as for those who watch him sitting on them.

The Baby Grand, and Other Stories, by Stacy Aumonier. London: Heinemann, 1926. 7s. 6d.

[Observer]

MR. STACY AUMONIER has devised a new formula — or, rather, has adapted to his own uses the old formula of the Unities. The story begins and ends in a quiet, commonplace, everyday setting. But in the interval the most astonishing things happen. The farm laborer is whisked away to the war zone by a German airplane, shares in an hour or two's crowded fighting, and is whisked back again to grumble at his granddaughter who wants to know if there is any news. Miss Bracegirdle goes for a trip abroad, and returns to the calm of Easingstoke Deanery after a night's adventure so incredible that she decides not to say a word about it. Or (and this is from the new volume) two men stroll out of a concert-room to get a drink, have the fight of their lives, and get back in time to hear the concluding Bach fugue. Or Mr. Frederick James Smith, assistant in a furniture establishment, arranges to meet his wife at an A.B.C. shop in the evening and go to the cinema. And in the meantime — 'I've waived a kingdom, and refused the hand of a princess; got engaged to an American millionaire's daughter; been kidnapped; was nearly sent to China; was threatened with having my throat cut — all in my spare time, like.'

In Mr. Aumonier's adroit hands this sonata form is curiously effective; and he has the discretion to use it sparingly. The first and longest story in the book, 'The Happy Man,' is a delicate and poignant study of family life and the theme 'What is happiness?' 'The Baby Grand,' from which the book takes its title, conforms more to the expectations of magazine readers, but is, of course, like all the tales, told with perfect art. In 'The Old Lady with Two Umbrellas,' Mr. Aumonier makes what is, we think, his first experiment in 'detective' fiction, and a bril-

lantly successful one. In more serious vein is the grim record of 'The Everlasting Club,' the story of seven men who are thrown together by chance in Picardy on Armistice Day, and who agree to dine together every year thereafter, till in the end only one is left to carry on the rite. Altogether, it is a budget of Mr. Aumonier's best, full of insight, irony, humor, and understanding.

A Wayfarer in Switzerland, by James F. Muirhead. London: Methuen and Company, 1926. 7s. 6d.

[*Daily Telegraph*]

THIS addition to Methuen's capital 'Wayfarer' series will be one of the most useful. Mr. Muirhead, though he gives helpful hints on mountaineering, does not aim at instructing the ardent Alpine climber. But his book, which has many good illustrations, will be the ideal companion of the ordinary traveler. He takes the wayfarer along with him gently, from end to end of the enchanting country, and discourses pleasantly as occasion arises of those early patriots with a consuming passion for liberty who made the country; of its glorious natural beauties; of its literature and art, so little known here; and even of its trade.

Many Englishmen would write down Swiss trade thus: 'Hotels, plus tourist traffic and condensed milk.' But the national Budget shows that silk and lace and embroidery, machinery and watches, with other manufactures, stand highest. Half of the Swiss population live by industry.

That, however, is incidental. It is Mr. Muirhead's business to show us the country. Why do we not, he says, get off the beaten track? He takes us off that beaten track. He invites us, for instance, to journey from Bâle through the Canton of Soleure, and to visit its capital, 'so complete in its modest mediævalism that one feels here farther removed from modernity than in almost any other Swiss town. There is but one Soleure!' The thirteenth-century clock tower and other old buildings are all a delight. And about the town is the Weissenstein (just over four thousand feet) of the Jura, with its wonderful view of the Alps, the view which Mr. Hilaire Belloc, in his *Path to Rome*, declared to belong to the things that make a man stop breathing.

There are all through the book, specially mentioned for the benefit of the modest climber, or

even the nonclimbing wayfarer, easy ascents and easy walks. These require no guides, and they sometimes are of surpassing beauty. They include the cable railway ascent from Lauterbrunnen to the Grütisch Alp, which includes at the start a view of the famous waterfall, the Staubbach, and afterward an astonishing panorama of the Eiger, the Mönch, the Jungfrau, the Silberhorn, and other Alps. The Forest Cantons and their fighters; Lausanne and Geneva and their literary associations; the Bernese Oberland; Mont Blanc, in a chapter called 'Switzerland by Courtesy' — the whole country is dealt with. And among the out-of-the way places to which Mr. Muirhead takes us are two peaceful, motor-free valleys.

Far End, by May Sinclair. London: Hutchinson and Company; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1926. \$2.00.

[*Westminster Gazette*]

ONE of Miss May Sinclair's most perfect novels is a short-long study, *The Life and Death of Harriet Frean*. *Far End* is not so short a story, but it is sparing in detail; yet it deals with the intricate matrimonial relations of Christopher and Hilda Vivart, stretched over a period of years, and the medium seems cramped for that kind of prolonged and delicate observation. Two extra-matrimonial relationships are involved, one of the body and one of the spirit, both of which might have been more convincing had the women round whom they centred been more real. As it is, one is left with the impression that Miss Sinclair is dealing with a thesis rather than with men and women, and there does not seem to be any reason why the story should have a happy ending. We gather that this is due to the gentle influencing of the house 'Far End,' and in making her reader feel its living charm May Sinclair is at her best. There are the old flashes of her genius for psychology in some of the brief indications of conversation, notably between Hilda and the widow, Mrs. Templeton, at Hilda's dinner-table. And the book is vivid enough to make people discuss it: 'Do you really think Christopher would —'

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BOOKS MENTIONED

WELLS, H. G. *The World of William Clissold*. New York: George H. Doran Company, 1926. 2 vols. \$5.00.

OUR OWN BOOKSHELF

The Book without a Name. Anonymous. New York: Brentano's, 1926. \$2.50.

THE eighteenth-century English aristocrat was the ideal type of anarchist. In this book of 'letters' from an unmarried lady of the period to her illegitimate son there is a finer scorn for the conventions — in the unpleasant sense of the word — than is possible in our self-conscious age. For these letters are really a series of essays dwelling on the virtues of an independent rural life passed in the society of Marcus Aurelius and Voltaire. The unknown authoress is possessed of a winning style and personality that are both as fresh after nearly two hundred years as they were the day when she and her little boy walked naked and unabashed under the trees. It is useless, of course, to wish that such people still lived — charming, humane, intelligent. The contrast between this lady and such dismal figures as Mrs. Sidney Webb and Rose Macaulay will strengthen the pessimist of conservative leanings who believes that every change is a change for the worse. The eighteenth-century enthusiast will also welcome a unique yet characteristic addition to his library. But the book will appeal most of all to the reader with no time for the luxuries of pessimism or for eighteenth-century research. Here is a singular highly civilized personality as refreshing as a week-end in the country.

London Nights, by Stephen Graham. New York: George H. Doran Company, 1926. Illustrated. \$4.00.

FOR all his Scotch name, Stephen Graham has something of the Russian about him. More than any other articulate Englishman of his time, he has steeped himself in the life of that country. That his new book does not concern Russia is obvious enough, but it breathes that love of distressed humanity so typical of the great Slavic masters. This is, of course, putting the case too strongly, for in his descriptions of London's great unwashed he betrays occasional symptoms of moral earnestness and subjectiveness that one could look for in vain in Dostoevskii.

London Nights is the fruit of many dark hours spent among the down-and-outers of the British capital. Mr. Graham has walked the Embankment, visited the prison at Pentonville, poked

his head into all-night coffee stalls, and made the acquaintance of every human derelict in the catalogue. Against his background of wide travel he compares these types with unfortunates in other parts of the world. There is no preaching — only a little of the simplest advice to those who would make their way in the great city; but Mr. Graham's tragedy is that *London Nights* is more likely to be read by the comfortably fixed few than by the indigent multitude who might profit by it. It is surprising that such a faithful picture of such a gloomy scene should not be more depressing than it is. Mr. Graham's sympathy and his unusual gifts as a reporter of the very highest type lift this book into something close to literature.

Kyra Kyralina, by Panait Istrati. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926. \$2.50.

READERS of the *Living Age* may remember an article published in our February 13 issue of this year that was written by the author of these stories; in the same number a note in *Life*, *Letters*, and the *Arts* quoted Romain Rolland's high praises of this ex-photographer on the Promenade des Anglais at Nice, the son of a Greek smuggler and a Rumanian peasant woman, who has traveled, a tattered adventurer, up and down Eastern Europe and the Levant. In the past twenty years millions have probably undergone experiences like Istrati's, but few of these wanderers are literate, to say nothing of literary.

In the three stories collected in this volume the author relates three episodes in the life of Stavro, the rogue. It is unquestionably both a truthful and a striking picture of what actually is the life of those mysterious shabby characters one sees continually in the Near East, and even in Paris, selling rugs, lemonade, fruit, and knickknacks. Hardly suited for reading aloud in the family circle, this book is as bitter and exotic as its background. There is none of the sweep or humanity of the great Russians here, whatever Brandes and Rolland may say, but such an atmosphere would not be quite true to the *mise en scène*. The niggardliness, the sharpness, of a Balkan trader are on every page. It is an addition to literature worthy to stand by Andreev and Artsibashev. Many readers ought to eat it up.

Seventy Years a Showman, by 'Lord' George Sanger. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1926. \$2.00.

SECRETS of the circus ring and side show, and incidents from the barbarism which underlay early Victorian civilization, are good reading. These are distinguished by a style with cadences and colors, but with a restraint unexpected in a writer to whom showman's patter had always been natural speech. Breathing a genial gratitude toward all society, Sanger retired in 1905 from a career he had run well. He published his book five years later. It is now reissued with a too charming preface.

The successful rival of Barnum and Buffalo Bill devotes more than half his space to early struggles, and the remainder to only the most striking of his triumphs. All the way through one wishes there were more. Sanger appears the master showman. Macabre and fantastic like the circus, the book, like the circus, leaves a good taste in one's mouth.

Upon the recovery of her heir from illness, Victoria with full magnificence once swept the London streets in procession; and Sanger swept behind her, gorgeous with his tinsel glories and with — O sanguine lion-tamer! — a player queen. Disraeli rose from his carriage out of respect to the mimic pageant, and Sanger got complimentary tickets to the final ceremony at St. Paul's. A light which could be cast on this event may lie hidden in archives — a light on this pompous trial of strength between life's chief vanities, the Theatre and the State. The minister had wit, his sovereign was shrewd — which made the decision? Each power having expended its force to the full, both should triumph. We do not know. But how great a queen was Victoria, and how good a taste the incident leaves behind it.

Snow and Steel, by Girolamo Sommi-Piccenardi. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1926. \$2.00.

THERE is still a belief in this country and elsewhere that the only soldiers who saw any real

action in the World War were on the Western Front. Russia's casualties, amounting in two years to more than those of France or England in twice that time, are conveniently ignored; and in spite of Mussolini's up-to-date advertising methods, there are those who feel that battles on the Italian front were *opéra bouffe* affairs between decadent Austrians and crazy Wops. Nothing could be more false. Anyone who reads this astonishing collection of true stories of the fighting in the Italian Alps will open his eyes. On no battle line, not even in von Mackensen's two brilliant Balkan campaigns, can there have been more sensational manœuvres than in these almost inaccessible fastnesses. Not only was the greatest daring required here, but fortitude was needed too — as on the occasion when two hundred men spent several weeks in a ramshackle shed that was in constant danger of being blown by the fierce gales over a nine-hundred-foot precipice. A different kind of courage was demanded of a half-dozen Italian soldiers who decoyed the Austrian forces up a mountain-side under which three tons of dynamite had been laid. These men all faced absolutely certain death either at the hands of the enemy or during the explosion. The author tells his stories simply, and leaves the reader admiring the bravery and intelligence of a great nation.

The Casuarina Tree, by W. Somerset Maugham. New York: George H. Doran Company, 1926. \$2.00.

Six short stories, each placed against an Oriental background, are bound together here. The publisher's description, 'Stories of passion and drama,' is in this case well justified. Four are concerned with murder, one with cowardice; five deal with passion, so easily aroused in the East. Mr. Maugham is never crude, and sometimes rises to great heights, as in 'Of Human Bondage.' Of the present collection 'The Letter' is undoubtedly the most skillful, but even this is not the equal of his best work. The stories are without exception good, but they neither add to nor detract from the author's reputation.

DISCRETION AND INDISCRETION

THE British Navy is a necessity which, at what cost soever, must be maintained up to a certain strength; whereas the United States Navy may perhaps be regarded in part as a work of supererogation, and in that sense as a gallant form of luxury, to which America is justly entitled, because she can afford luxuries.

— *The Morning Post*

* * *

The slave plans bring the workers face to face with the menace of a new war in the future. Even more direct and sinister is the danger of a new armed attack on the Union of Soviet Republics, for which the Tory Government has been working ever since it reached office. The open campaign for a rupture of relations carried on by the Tory press has been accompanied by a secret campaign in the Border States. Everywhere they are organizing military preparations for an attack on the workers' republic.

— 'Comrade' George Hardy

* * *

It is quite true that villagers have not cinemas, but they are much better without them.

— *The Duke of Northumberland*

* * *

I criticize doctrinaire State Socialism not because it seeks to engage men's altruistic impulses in the service of Society, or because it departs from *laissez faire*, or because it takes away from man's natural liberty to make a million, or because it has courage for bold experiments. All these things I applaud. I criticize it because it misses the significance of what is actually happening; because it is in fact little better than a dusty survival of a plan to meet the problems of fifty years ago based on a misunderstanding of what someone said a hundred years ago.

— *J. M. Keynes*

* * *

Our physical eyes blind us to the spiritual, but if we could see with the eyes of the soul it would be too much for us.

The scientific truth of the spiritual world will be forced on the attention of the man of science in the near future.

If I had to predict the revolution which will follow that meeting, I should suggest that, whereas the nineteenth century dealt with the material

world, the future will see great discoveries in the spiritual world. — *Sir Oliver Lodge*

* * *

A dictatorship is a confession of political incapacity and sloth in the governed.

— *Signor Nitti*

* * *

The royalty owners have quite as much right to their property as any man in the country has to his house, his shop, or his allotment.

— *Winston Churchill*

* * *

Interest in the Test Match is one test of a liberal education. — *Mardy Jones, M.P.*

* * *

A liberal education is good for many purposes, but it is not good for the work of managing mines. — *Mr. Walsh, M.P.*

* * *

There is only one important truth about the fashion of this world, and that is that it passes away. — *G. K. Chesterton*

* * *

For thirty years the German Kaiser was able to preserve the peace of the world, and, with God's help, he will do it again.

— *Count Finckenstein*

* * *

Marriage will be the same a century hence as it is now: a curious kind of cross between a dog fight and the peace that passeth all understanding; something that nobody quite likes and nearly everybody likes well enough to stay in for life once they have got in. — *Rebecca West*

* * *

This is not a paradise; but it is still, judged by all reasonable tests, the best-governed, the happiest, and the most prosperous country in Europe. — *A. G. Gardiner*

* * *

It is perfectly impossible for any man to talk for twelve months in a year without talking more nonsense than he would like to talk.

— *Stanley Baldwin*

* * *

We are the most naturally religious people in the world. — *The Bishop of London.*

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☞ Hendrik van Loon, Edward W. Bok, William Lyon Phelps, Roger Burlingame, Fairfax Downey and Will Rose contribute to the number.