

the rest from the numerous outlying versions—has been turned into English by Florence Simmonds, and issued in a handsome edition. There are a score of illustrations by Maurice Lalau wherein are designated with varying success the courtly shimmer and opulence, the airily-by-the-wayness, the mystery which form the elements in any modern retrospect to those mediæval days. (Lippincott, \$3.75 net.)

One of the most elaborate of the gift-book editions is that containing the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" on pages provided with marginal designs and artistically wrought commentaries; the type, specially constructed, trails in grapevine figures. The book is illustrated in color by Willy Pogány, who is best known for his illustrations of "The Rubáiyát," and although in visualizing the supernatural, as in this epic of a sea having laws unto itself, there could never be agreement on the part of many, Coleridge's descriptive hints have been followed faithfully. All of the artist's work has a very decided interest. (Crowell, \$5 net.)

A. M. Broadley's sumptuously illustrated two volumes on "Napoleon in Caricature" may be mentioned here among the holiday publications, although it will at a later date be reviewed at length. J. Holland Rose contributes an introductory essay on "Pictorial Satire as a Factor in Napoleonic History." (Lane, \$12.50 net.)

RAILWAY PROBLEMS.

American Railway Problems in the Light of European Experience: or, Government Regulation vs. Government Operation of Railways. By Carl S. Vrooman. New York: Henry Frowde. \$2 net.

Government Ownership of Railways, Considered as the Next Great Step in American Progress. By Anthony Van Wagenen. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$1.25 net.

Railroad Administration. By Ray Morris. New York: D. Appleton & Co. \$2 net.

Whatever one may think of the views expressed by Mr. Vrooman, one is likely, having taken up his book, to read it to the end. For it is a dispassionate and painstaking account of the experience of various countries with the problems of government regulation or ownership, and withal so entertaining that the views expressed appear not merely plausible, but well-nigh convincing. To be sure, it exploits a thesis. The author is a firm believer in the ultimate nationalization of the railways of the United States. Rather than have this policy come upon us suddenly and find us unprepared to grapple with it, as was the case with Italy, we should anticipate the future by devising as efficient a system of regulation as possible. If such a system of control should prove entirely successful, we should have accomplished what no other nation has yet done; if it should fail, the next step would be government ownership. And fail it must, in the author's

opinion, for after a certain point is reached any increase in regulation becomes inelastic, cumbersome, and burdensome to the public and the carriers. Regulation can be nothing but a phase in the education of the nation. "The railways of the country to-day are being operated under a suspended sentence of nationalization."

With this underlying conviction, Mr. Vrooman aims to demonstrate that government ownership, if brought about in a conservative manner, is not so dangerous as most of us believe. His method of treatment is to take up one problem after another, and show how it has been met in various countries under the differing conditions of government and corporate management. Although he properly rejects as unscientific any attempt to decide the question by a detailed comparison of European and American railways, yet the method he adopts, which compares government-owned with private railways in the same country, is likewise inconclusive. For in any country in which the policy of government ownership predominates, private railways are at such a disadvantage, and have so little incentive to efficiency, that they can hardly be accepted as fair examples of the results of private initiative. One comparison he does make which appears to have real validity—that between the French Northern, a private road, and the Belgium system; but here he is under some difficulty to sustain his thesis that the government-owned road is, all things considered, the more beneficial to the public.

Mr. Vrooman very properly selects our accident record as one of the weak spots in American railway management, yet a study of English statistics makes it evident that reform may be brought about without nationalization. His discussion of the spoils system in relation to government ownership is hardly convincing to an American, for he confines himself to a description of the civil service in Belgium, Switzerland, and Prussia. Such illustrations can hardly reconcile one to the thought of injecting a million railway employees into the civil service of the United States. Nor does he dispose satisfactorily of the most potent argument against the European system—its lack of elasticity in meeting the requirements of the shipping community.

In spite of occasional lapses into unwarranted denunciation, and in spite of the use at times of statistical data in such manner as to create a false impression, Mr. Vrooman's presentation of the case is a fair one from his point of view. But his final conclusion puts the whole question beyond the reach of argument, for he insists that, cost what it may in time or money, nationalization is a luxury that no nation can afford to be without—which is, of course, a matter of opinion.

Mr. Van Wagenen's book is of quite a different stamp. He would have government ownership at once. Four-fifths of the nations of the world have adopted it, and cowardice alone prevents us from following in their footsteps. His book contains much more generalization than information, and much more denunciation than argument. He is reckless in the use of statistics, and frequently inconsistent in statement. One or two examples will suffice. To demonstrate the growth in railway casualties, he uses the year 1907, in which 610 passengers were killed. Yet that year was an unusual one, in which the number killed was fourteen per cent. higher than the next highest year for which statistics are available, and 75 per cent. above the average for the ten years which he is considering. His statement that in round numbers, the railways kill annually 12,000 persons is quite erroneous, for, although the number killed, including trespassers and all, was 11,839 in the unusual year 1907, this figure has never been equalled before or since, and the average number killed between 1888 and 1909 was a little less than 8,000. The case is bad enough without exaggeration. When arguing for a reduction in rates, the author calls attention to the fact that rebates have to a great extent been abolished, but in another connection he contends that railways are undertaking to collect from consumers generally millions which they pay in rebates. Dividends are paid on "billions of watered stock" by railways whose crude methods are the "sorry misfit of the times," and this utterly demoralized system of railways is contrasted with the superb management by the Government of our postal system and rural free delivery! The reason that we entered upon government regulation, rather than ownership a quarter of a century ago was because the "men who look after the railway interests in the Congress of the United States" procured the passage of the Interstate Commerce act, and turned public attention away from government ownership.

Among those who like this form of attack, the book may receive a welcome, but among thinking men, it will find few sympathetic readers and no converts. Mr. Van Wagenen declares in his preface that he approached the publication of his book with much hesitation, and that he offered his contribution only because no one else had presented this side of the question. After reading it, one wonders whether his excuse was altogether sufficient. Both Mr. Vrooman and Mr. Van Wagenen err in implying that government ownership is a question of principle. The history of the movement demonstrates indisputably that it is merely a question of expediency, and, for the present at least, the people of the United States do not

regard railway nationalization as expedient.

Mr. Morris's book on "Railroad Administration" has little to do with problems of regulation, but is rather a consideration of the railway as a working machine. Yet mention of it in this connection is not out of place, for in many ways its clear analysis of railway methods is an answer to the charges so carelessly made by Mr. Van Wagenen. When one follows in detail the extraordinary organization which has been built up to do the work of transportation, the efforts now making to improve the physical conditions of the properties, and the various methods of cost-keeping and of statistical comparison that have been devised to promote efficiency of operation, and then compares the conduct of this industry with that of a government bureau or investigating commission, with its wasteful use of public funds—a condition familiar to all who have come into contact with governmental methods in this country—one is amazed to find a writer like Van Wagenen advocating government ownership because of our "crude, disorganized, unscientific system of railways." A careful reading of Mr. Morris's chapter on Control through Statistics, one of the best in the book, should effectually dispose of that indictment.

The book is evidently intended as a manual for those who are engaged in railway service or who desire to enter it. It is a weakness of present day railway organization that the rank and file know only the work of their own department, and are almost entirely ignorant of the industry as a whole. This volume should give them the point of view from which they will be able to correlate their duties with those of their fellows in the organization of which they are a part. Largely of a descriptive character, the treatise opens with a chapter on the physical and financial beginnings of a railway, and continues with discussions of railway organization on large and small roads, on British railways, and on the government-owned roads of Germany, Italy, and India. In another chapter, that on financial organization, attention is given to the various kinds of securities issued. The author does not believe in the control of capitalization, and maintains that capitalization and rates have no relation to one another. Commissions, he thinks, are not likely to accomplish any permanent useful effects, and the result of endowing them with rate-making power will be to keep rates at a higher level than they would be if unregulated. The only beneficial effect of such bodies is in their function as safety-valves for popular indignation. While we may not agree with this somewhat extreme position, we can endorse the author's contention that the recent pop-

ular uprising against the railways was largely due to railway blundering, and that a more consistent effort to conciliate, rather than antagonize, would do much to remove the source of popular discontent. The volume is supplied with many charts, illustrating various forms of railway organization.

CURRENT FICTION.

John Winterbourne's Family. By Alice Brown. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Miss Brown's world is inexhaustibly peopled with original characters which defy classification under any ordinary rules. From simple to subtle they range, but perhaps her forte is the exposition of the subtle in the seeming simple. No person is too insignificant outwardly to take a part in her drama, and the part is always a complex one because every human being is a complicated being. The sweeping of a hearth, the polishing of a table, the caprice of a child, the mood of a woman, are affairs of portent. Events are seldom exciting, yet one reads with almost gasping interest, breathing an air thick with the weight of small but immensely significant affairs. Her characters often are not in the least like any whom one has met, but they move with an authority no more to be disputed than that of the creatures of mythology. There is, indeed, not a little of the mythological in Miss Brown's New Englander.

John Winterbourne seeking to evade the "Tyranny of Things," and to sit by his fireside reading Theocritus, is at once a simple, single-hearted man, and a great, striving, resisting, natural force. Mrs. Ramsay, leaving her children daily while she lectures on causes, is no mere Mrs. Jellyby, but a faulty humanitarian on a large scale. Bess, daughter of earth, sweeping, cooking, ministering, is a domesticated Valkyr. Little happens throughout the story that is not homely, but the way in which it happens gives it profound and universal meaning. No need to sketch the plot. It deals with nothing more thrilling outwardly than domestic incompatibilities and the patenting of an ear-trumpet. But to the inner man it makes fervent appeal with its insight into human relations and its silent plea for right living and for strict attention to one's "job," however little time it leaves one for reading Theocritus. It is a noteworthy book, homelier but higher than "Rose MacLeod."

Pan's Mountain. By Amélie Rives. New York: Harper & Bros.

This tale owes its unusual and very palpable atmosphere to the strangely endowed heroine at its centre. Dione, although of modern birth, is a pagan. The mingling of Servian and Italian blood

in her veins inclines her to regard, and, more, to feel, the old deities of whom her father told her, as real, and she pours midnight libations to the god, except for her unworshipped, whose haunt she fancies to be on the lake-guarded height, which she has rechristened Pan's Mountain. This intellectual unconventionality reappears in her unqualified frankness. But, however strange, she is never unreal. Exalted happiness and unfathomable bitterness find expression in words and actions that are consonant with her direct, elemental nature. As a creation of fiction, especially of recent fiction, Dione is refreshingly individual. Her few fellow-actors on the narrow stage are not dimly drawn, but none of them can vie with her in compelling the interest of their auditors. Adverse criticism must content itself with pointing out faults of style, and here it cannot be gainsaid that the author is decidedly overfond of the simile, which produces a slight effect of monotony. An odd error is the use of a form of "lay" for one of "lie," which occurs twice.

The Caravaners. By the author of "Elizabeth and Her German Garden." New York: Doubleday, Page & Co.

This author's specialties, as her readers well know, are Man, Prussia, and above all, Prussian Man. She has approached or rather attacked them from many points, and now she surpasses herself in ingenuity by choosing as the sally-port for her onslaught the mouth of Prussian Man himself. Baron von Ottringel, major of a Prussian artillery regiment, conceives the idea of celebrating by a journey the twenty-fifth anniversary of his marriage. True, his silver-wedding wife has been dead for some years, but the institution has persisted with a negligible twelve months' forced interruption. Surely the Major was right in his reply to the later wife who questioned its being "their" silver-wedding. He tells the tale himself:

"Dear wife," I retorted, surprised, "you know very well that it is mine, and what is mine is also by law yours, and that, therefore, without the least admissible logical doubt, it is yours."

The trip leads the Baron and his wife with a few friends to "caravaning" in England. For a moment, one expects a cheerful gypsying story with adventures and scenery and the international picnic touch. Instead of this, it is a protracted, unconscious confession of unbroken caddishness from one properly characterized by a fellow camper as "a very grievous bounder." He is insufferable in every direction; conspicuously so in all that concerns the differences between his own country and England; most of all in the relation of any Prussian husband to any wife. What with bad weather, bad roads, insufficient food, and an occasionally in-