

his newest book, "Bilder aus der letzten Kaiserzeit," he describes the personalities and ideas of such men as Holstein, Bülow, Tirpitz, Bethmann-Hollweg, and the Emperor, revealing some of their unpublished letters and documents. The reader will come to the conclusion that Holstein was one of the most sinister figures in the history of imperial Germany. One of the nicknames that most stuck to him was the "Gray Eminence." His influence has proved to be more than gray. But as far as the war guilt is concerned the serious student will share the view expressed under the title *They All Lied in The Nation* of October 11, 1922: "Divided responsibility indeed, both in the years and in the days preceding the war."

HERMANN LUTZ

A Textbook on Literature

A History of French Literature. From the Earliest Times to the Great War. By William A. Nitze and E. Preston Dargan. Henry Holt and Company. \$5.

IT is probably because the critics who recognize the beauty and significance of contemporary letters are engaged in establishing the value of this epoch's creative effort that the writing of histories of literature is left to those who believe the production of worthwhile literary work ceased about thirty years ago. This unfortunate circumstance has been as characteristic of every age and tongue as it is of our own, and it is most especially true of French literature. Despite a growing revolt on the part of her liberal scholars, France teaches her youth, through textbook and general survey, all the prejudices of Brunetière and Bourget, incorporated into their *petites histoires* by such petty pedagogues as Abry, Audic, and Crouzet.

Hence one can appreciate the thrill of discovery that was mine when I saw in the table of contents that one-tenth of this large, solid volume was concerned with the writings of our own times. It was even more thrilling to think that American students had done for French literature what the French want and need but have not yet been able to accomplish. These suppositions only increased the disappointment which followed further research.

Valuable though their work is as a limited "Who's Who" of modern French writers; dignified and intelligent though it is in comparison with the inanities of French pedagogues, Professors Nitze and Dargan have done nothing more in the chapters dealing with the literature of the past thirty or forty years than to transcribe the antagonisms of Brunetière toward the work of his contemporaries and to project that critic's narrow vision upon the literary achievements of the decade between his death and the war. Lacking his passionate opinions, the authors are unconvincing in their decisions, and in view of recent developments, they appear unsound in their judgments. It is unsound, for example, to ignore the influence, the power, and the intrinsic worth of Remy de Gourmont and to dismiss him in these lines: "Gourmont is also a sort of Intuitionist with regard to aesthetic theories. Following Bergson in the 'dissociation des idées,' he is led by this analysis into a corrosive and pernicious immoralism, especially in poetry and fiction. His criticism is likewise based on a sensual principle, but shows genuine gifts of divination and taste."

In fact, the professors are particularly unfortunate in their summaries and generalizations. They revel in labels, and in their efforts at condensation make these labels meaningless or ridiculous. "Zola lived largely as a recluse, and he was not an artist; his fiction suffers from these handicaps." This of the man who wrote "Art is life seen through a temperament"! And again: "In the meantime, the brothers had founded naturalism, of the low life kind, in 'Germinie Lacerteux.' . . . The Goncourt brothers were a complicated pair, and accordingly their work is composed of strangely mixed materials."

That the authors have not availed themselves of the opportunity to make a vital contribution to the study of French lit-

erature is obvious. Their treatment of the moderns is wholly inadequate, but the earlier periods receive more extensive and careful consideration. Here, too, though now on familiar ground, they are interested in rating rather than in evaluating the subjects, and they are exceedingly liberal in this rating. So far as I can judge, they have borrowed the superlatives from the partisans of each writer to impress upon the student that whatever was is good.

JOHAN J. SMERTENKO

Presbyterian Demons

Demonism Verified and Analyzed. By Rev. Hugh W. White. The Presbyterian Committee of Publication. Priceless.

MISGUIDED modernists struggle along under the mistaken impression that demons (except for such imps as the beloved demon rum, the comforting demon nicotine, and the flapper demon soda-pop), after flourishing from Jerusalem to Salem, Massachusetts, were formally discovered to be nothing but a mob neurosis, or an individual case of poorly digested *gefüllte fisch* or mince pie. Nothing is closer to the false. Demons are in again, take it, as we do, from the Presbyterian Committee of Publications. The Rev. Mr. White refers casually to well-authenticated (we have his word for it) cases of demonism today in China, New Zealand, Mongolia, Japan, Korea, India, Africa, Germany, the Moslem lands, Mexico, and even New England. We have often wondered as to the motivating agency behind the Ku Klux Klan, normalcy, the popularity of Dr. Frank Crane, and the letters of statesman Hyman to statesman Hearst. Let us look further into this matter.

The Rev. Mr. White reports 368 cases of demons, of which 304 Chinese ones came under his own observation. Case No. 58, a Mrs. Ts'wei, had at first 125 demons, of which 120 had left her before he saw her. She was cured, in part, by the use of the name "Jesus," which is apparently respected by the most hardened devil. "Superstition," defines Mr. White, "is the erroneous attributing of phenomena in nature to direct arbitrary volition by spirits, to the denial or exclusion of scientific principles." In his victory over superstition, based upon scientific principles, he comes to the conclusion: "That there is a Satan and that Satan is responsible for demonism is put beyond question by the fact that the lines of demarcation between the countries which have not demonism and those which have it coincide with the limits of Christian influence." His religious geography may be excused as partly superstitious, since Germany, Mexico, and New England are three countries which have demons, and therefore, by his implication, are non-Christian. He implies further, of course, that Satan is not in Christian countries. And Satan inspires all sin and wickedness: for instance, "for the cause of lust and cruelty . . . no adequate interpretation has been found except on the hypothesis of a Satan with power to suggest." And Satan is not in this Christian land: neither in Yonkers nor Hoboken, not where Hohokus purls nor where Secaucus towers, not among the dives of Coney Island nor the vinous reaches of Milwaukee, Kokomo, and Keokuk, is there the faintest print of the cloven heel and the cloven soul, of the forked tail and the brimstone breath. There is—there can be—no crime wave. Let the burglars, lynchers, hold-up men, kidnappers, firebugs, motor murderers, bootleggers, and all the moral rest of our citizens repeat with Suey, the leading Chinese psychic healer, "Day by day, in every way, we're getting moraler and moraler."

These demons—and Healer Hickson, says the Rev. Mr. White, wrote him that he cured 200 cases at one meeting in India—are possessed chiefly by the fox and weasel spirits and speak English fluently with the tongues of illiterate Chinese who know no English. A headache, says Mr. White, may often be recognized as incipient demonism; there can be no headache in Christian countries—it is an error of mortal mind. A later work by the same author may establish the actual existence of men who are devils in their own home towns, and even of cigarette

fiends, bridge fiends, and golf fiends. Thus modern science tramples superstition into the soil. Have you a little demon in your home?

CLEMENT WOOD

The Tramping Methodist

The Tramping Methodist. By Sheila Kaye-Smith. E. P. Dutton and Company. \$2.

EVERYONE who has read "Joanna Godden" and "Green Apple Harvest" will wish to read the reprint of Miss Kaye-Smith's first book, "The Tramping Methodist," in eager search for personalities as intense and troublesome and appealing as either Joanna or Bob Fuller of the later novels. These two book people are so living that they penetrate one's subconscious knowledge of men and women and are added, like real people, to one's accumulated understanding of human conduct. Humphrey Lyte, the tramping methodist, is a less complicated person than the wrong-headed and magnificent Joanna or than that other wayward preacher, Bob Fuller of "Green Apple Harvest." His loves and his spiritual enthusiasms take him less hard, yet he is none the less real.

"The Tramping Methodist" is an extraordinary book for a girl hardly out of her teens to have written. Unified and swift, and because less subtle, perhaps more of a piece than the later novels, it is preeminently "a good story," reminiscent a trifle of "David Balfour" in the drama and romance of its narrative—a Stevensonian likeness which disappears in the later work. If one also compares Miss Kaye-Smith to Hardy in her reproduction of the soil and contour, of the quality and essence of her Sussex, it does not mean that she is an imitative writer. Indeed, to me she is one of the two or three women now writing really original fiction. For she does not merely expound an environment or a point of view—an accomplishment which we are apt to acclaim as art in America today—what she does is to get inside the souls of her characters to extract the ferment which is a novel. Therefore she does more than to give us a picture of nineteenth century evangelical England against the detailed background of a Sussex farming community, she shows us within the limits of environment and point of view, the working of that uncomfortable spiritual yeast which is in all men, though lacking in most of the Babbitts and moon-calves of the modern novel.

KATHARINE SERGEANT ANGELL

Reality and Imperfection

City Block. By Waldo Frank. Published by Waldo Frank. \$7.

AMONG recent books "City Block" stands out as unusual both in conception and execution. There is not, in the whole collection, anything that suggests the work of other contemporary writers; unless, perhaps, the treatment of some scenes faintly recalls Evelyn Scott. Few of the stories have any plot. The theme of each is a mental or spiritual tragedy revealed by the characters' minds, as wheels revolving in a machine exhibit its motive and purpose. When the workings of these minds are not too vaguely expressed, the author's thorough acquaintance with the cloud of miseries that envelops the city, his insight, and his power of description make him peculiarly successful. In *Murder, Under the Dome*, and *The Table*, the consistently destructive power over the life of the man or woman moves sullenly to its inevitable end. Mr. Frank has taken for the keynote of his book this sentence from Spinoza: "By reality and perfection I understand the same thing." But he seems unaware that he can weaken or destroy this impression of reality by irrelevant excursions into symbolism and sentimentality.

Side by side with the burning presentation of minds like Meyer Lanich's and Lotte Rabinowich's, which are crucified in the intensity of their misery, is placed the wandering, second-rate sketch of John the Baptist. Side by side with the ruthless picture in *Murder* are the unconvincing and hysterical reactions

of Clarence Lipper, Patrick Broaddus, Paula Dessyn, Luis Ajala Dennis. Genuine emotion like fire warms with its own heat; the gas log of sentimentality is a cold, blue flicker in comparison.

Six of the fourteen stories are decidedly superior. They are *Murder, Under the Dome* (two stories), *The Table*, *Candles*, and *Charity*. Their action moves slowly but they reveal in cruel light every corner of that cabinet of curiosities, the human heart. The manuscripts of *Under the Dome* would be a distinctive beginning for another collection. They are singularly representative and moving, in both subject and treatment. The *Altar of the World* is strong and interesting but there is too much of it.

Throughout the book the writing is, for the most part, powerful and original. There are unusual figures and much vitality in the descriptions. If sympathy for your characters, suffering with them, is an important element in fiction, the author has stood the test in a notable half dozen instances. Sophie, Lanich, Lotte, Godfrey, and Dora, Rudd we cannot forget. Their tragedies are before us as charred scaffoldings of houses, burned before their building was completed. The book is an achievement. It is not homogeneous, it is singularly uneven. But it is the best work Mr. Frank has yet done.

LAURA BENÉT

Criminological Wisdom and Unwisdom

The Psychology of the Criminal. By M. Hamblin Smith, M.A.,

M.D. Robert M. McBride and Company. \$2.

Crime. Its Cause and Treatment. By Clarence Darrow.

Thomas Y. Crowell Company. \$2.50.

In the Clutch of Circumstance. My Own Story by a Burglar.

D. Appleton and Company. \$2.

DR. M. HAMBLIN SMITH, who is medical officer of H. M. Prison at Birmingham, England, and a lecturer on criminology, has as his thesis that conduct being the result of mental life, the intensive investigation of the cases of individual criminals "is the road to the solution of the problems of criminality." Maybe so. But psychoanalysis aided by some scheme of mental tests will not do the whole bag of tricks. The "problems of criminality" are not all or solely individual problems. Some are social and require for their solution fundamental social adjustments.

If Dr. Smith cannot vaunt any startling contribution to the rather meager science of criminology, he has at least put behind him the conventional views. Those who still applaud the imprisonment of men and women for political or economic opinion will probably write him down as a dangerous radical after reading this sentence: "Eternal principles of right and justice may exist, but our limited intelligences are unable to discover what these principles are." Such folk and all others whose god of salvation is brute force, indeed every one, can read his book with great profit.

Mr. Darrow's treatise is frankly popular, which serves to explain why it has reached a third printing. It comes from the reflections and experiences of more than a generation spent in the courts. He writes in lawyer-like fashion, rather prolixly, but as one of refreshingly liberal views even if he does obtrude his own opinions as pretty final. To say that he has tried to present the most recent scientific thought and investigation in the domain of human conduct would be far fetched. He brushes that field very hastily and gives one the impression of making light of the only real advance made in modern criminology.

Mr. Darrow probably would be the last man to contend that he has made a scientific contribution to our knowledge of the origin of crime; and in respect to its treatment he naturally has not discovered a specific. Even so he will probably be accused by the befogged multitude of a dangerously lenient attitude toward the criminal. He is intensely human and does not forget that the wrongdoer is like unto ourselves. The book is refreshing in contrast to the usual professional preachment.