

occasion and merits no opinion is expressed, from eventuating in bloodshed or disorder. The German papers are not quoted, but the admission is made that the socialist *Lokal Anzeiger* disapproves. We are informed that the American newspapers are "likewise favorable," but we are given no citations. And this is the entire chapter on the "unanimous satisfaction" of the foreign press.

We have the compiler's word and the general's, but not a trace of evidence, not a concrete fact or a figure, upon the purifying and regenerating effect of the coup. Yet we do have a readable account of the curious affair, enriched with photographs of all the important actors.

ROY TEMPLE HOUSE

A Successor of Conrad?

Ordeal. By Dale Collins. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

JUST as word came of the death of Joseph Conrad, a first novel appeared by one who may prove to be his successor. "Ordeal," like almost any of Conrad's novels, shows men and women in the grip of implacable nature. The mid-Pacific is there, vast and impressive, with its burning trades and swift, fierce hurricanes, capricious and dwarfing to the human destinies that float across its surface. Its moods become natural agents in the progress of the tale. The tropic calm, the welcome rain, the storm which batters the fragile yacht and makes a derelict of her, all help to deliver the occupants of the *Spray* into Ted's cruel hands as the storm in "Victory" prevents Davidson from reaching the island of Samburan and precipitates the final catastrophe.

"Ordeal" tells how Ted the steward, by malign contrivance and with the aid of ocean calm and storm, achieved majesty on board a yacht. Ted was a "bully who had sulked through years of servitude and, whining bitterly the while, had ground hate to a razor-edge on the wheel of circumstance." In the perfection of his villainy he is reminiscent of Mr. Jones or of Ricardo.

To satisfy his lust for power he murdered the mate. He set passengers and crew against one another. His control of the *Spray*, complete in that moment of hurricane, stirred him at last to maniac delusions of grandeur like those which possessed Kurtz in "Heart of Darkness."

The situation is one that Conrad himself might have used. But the author of "Lord Jim" would have developed it from some romantic aspect, while Mr. Collins's treatment is cynical and realistic. He shows human nature reckless but unheroic in its moments of ordeal. The crude, primitive instincts—hunger, sex, self-preservation—are all that remain. So the wealthy passengers of the *Spray* are dazed and brutalized by the hardships through which they pass. Viola Thorpe, the exquisite, the magnetic, quarrels with her husband like any fish-wife, and Paul Thorpe, thinker and sensitive scholar, descends to beating his wife. Only old Lady Daley, sheltered behind the wall of deafness, maintains her balance, and by an act of glorified common sense accomplishes the downfall of the steward. For once danger is not alluring and peril does not elevate, and the passengers of the *Spray* are none the wiser for their experience. They have suffered no sea-change at the end of their six-weeks' struggle. Returned to his world, Thorpe and his friends accept the pink-and-gold comforts of the rescue-ship *Ithalia* as if there had never been a time when they longed for tobacco or prayed for an additional ration of water.

Though it lacks the grandeur of theme which one finds in the best of Conrad, there is sustained power in this harsh, straightforward narrative. It is told in cadenced phrases, with a wealth of shrewd imagery often as beautiful as Conrad's own. The shifting metaphors correspond to atmospheric changes and to the changing quality of human emotions. This habit of symbolism has certainly been derived from the elder writer. The marks of his master's hands are plain on Mr. Collins.

ROSE LEE

Human Conduct

Pleasure and Behavior. By F. L. Wells. D. Appleton and Company. \$2.50.

MR. WELLS has written a book that few can read to the end. All humanity is interested in his question: Is there such a thing as "pleasure"—something which can serve as a stimulus for adjustment? Is it something that we can strive for and attain, as we can technique in painting or in music or as we can material wealth? Or is "pleasure" merely a word carried along as a term mystical philosophers like to play with?

Unfortunately, with Mr. Wells the latter is the case. "Pleasure" with him seems to be an essence of some kind—a mental existence. It seems there can be both physical and mental pleasure. When we inquire searchingly into them we are virtually sent to school again to read introspective psychology.

"The chief pleasures arise from the operation of the major instincts. Such instincts serve a special end or goal and primarily meet a bodily need." Apparently the past ten-year onslaught on the concept of instincts at the hands of psychologists has passed lightly over Mr. Wells's head. It is evident that he still prefers teleology to modern science.

One must accuse Mr. Wells of being unsystematic and almost trite. At the end of each chapter, as at the end of the book, we hear ourselves saying almost aloud: Shall we never have a book on human conduct freed from scholasticism and mid-Victorianism—one based wholly upon facts gleaned from watching people live?

JOHN B. WATSON

Music and Musicians

The New Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians. Edited by Waldo Selden Pratt. The Macmillan Company. \$6.

THERE has long been a need for an abridged and up-to-date encyclopedia of music and musicians, one more international in tendency than that of the anglicized Grove's. Waldo Selden Pratt's work is an attempt to meet this need. Its stated aim is to combine in one volume of about a thousand pages "the essential values of the several lines of dictionary-making in the musical field." The material has been condensed and headed under three divisions, each division having its own alphabet and followed by its own appendix. According to the design outlined in the preface, the first division gives "the form and terms of musical art," with a survey of the bibliography relating to them. The second division gives biographical and statistical facts of "some 7,500 musicians who have been active during the last two hundred years, with a classified summary of the work of about 1,000 others before the year 1700. And the third division gives the principal musical organizations and institutions throughout the musical world, with a chronological list of operas and oratorios produced since 1900.

The material easily falls into the divisions outlined, and is fairly comprehensive, except in the Americana. Why, for instance, should Lambert Murphy, Florence Macbeth, Kathleen Howard, and Lila Robeson be mentioned and such equally prominent singers as Sophie Braslau, Jeanne Gordon, Mabel Garrison, Lucy Gates, Orville Harrold, Edward Johnson, and others be omitted? Why a paragraph given to Maud Powell and only a few lines to Leonora Jackson, who had an even more brilliant career and was probably the greatest violinist we ever produced? Indeed, the biographical section as a whole is exceedingly weakened by the editors' policy of trying to characterize and estimate their subjects. With the Russians, for example, Moussorgsky and Scriabin are listed as "eminent," Gretchaninoff "important," Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakoff "distinguished," Prokofieff "ultra-modern," and Stravinsky "eccentric." In Central Europe, Schönberg is merely "eccentric," while Schreker is "eminent"; and the two finest English composers, Holst and

Bax, are introduced without any adjectives at all, though Vaughan Williams is "eminent" and Arthur Hinton "important." Or again, Offenbach and Sousa are "famous," while Richard and Johann Strauss, Schumann and Debussy are only "distinguished." Our own John Alden Carpenter is merely headed as "merchant and composer." Occasionally these biased headings stray into biased criticism, which seems strangely out of place in a volume that should adhere solely to impersonal facts. Moreover, such criticism may seem exceedingly absurd five or ten years from now when what appears "eccentric," "futuristic," and "important" to the editors today may appear very old-fashioned indeed to the world then. Nor will the "New" of the title be particularly appropriate, unless the editors contemplate a revision and addition every few years. The illustrations of instruments and musicians scattered throughout the volume seem to have been selected in a somewhat haphazard way, and might well have been omitted. But as the ideal encyclopedia has yet to make its appearance, one must, perforce, recommend this one in the meantime, for it is the best one of its kind that has come our way.

HENRIETTA STRAUS

Books in Brief

The Authors' Thames. By Gordon S. Maxwell. Brentano's. \$4.50.

The Thames, in John Burns's famous phrase, is "liquid history," and much of that history is literary as well as political. Mr. Maxwell has provided us here with a thesaurus of the river's literary associations from Julius Caesar to Jerome—the English Jerome. He not only records its connection with the lives of distinguished English writers who have made their homes in the Thames Valley but transcribes the numerous allusions to it in literature of every variety. He recalls even such incidents as Becky Sharp's throwing Johnson's Dictionary out of the window of the coach when she left Miss Pinkerton's Academy on Chiswick Mall. The book covers only the stretches of the river between Putney and Windsor, but Mr. Maxwell takes into account its tributaries also, and is thus able to bring in Box Hill and George Meredith. The compilation is a useful one, and the wonder is that no one has undertaken the task before.

Poe—Man, Poet, and Creative Thinker. By Sherwin Cody. Boni and Liveright. \$2.

Mr. Cody's book is less important than its title would seem to indicate; one expects a study and gets an anthology. There are a brief biographical introduction and short prefatory comments to the different groups of selections, but more than three-fourths of the book is Poe's own, and Mr. Cody, very much of an enthusiast, does not illuminate greatly. Poe's personality, now overlaid with the successive coats of lamp-black and whitewash applied by his various biographers, is not made clearer and the relation between that character and his works is nowhere satisfactorily explained. The forces that wrecked his life also were responsible for his works, but that fact few of his critics have attempted to explain or even been willing to admit.

Footlights and Spotlights. By Otis Skinner. The Bobbs-Merrill Company. \$5.

Among other things, an "old-school" actor is one of those who in boyhood were somewhat incongruously inspired by love of Shakespeare to go out and act Uncle Tom or something worse upon the contemporary stage. By this definition or any other one Mr. Skinner belongs to the old school. His father, a Universalist minister, knew Barnum, who was a Universalist because that was the only Christian sect which "believed in success," and, armed with an introduction from Barnum, Skinner set out upon his adventures. Looking back over the years

he has many anecdotes to tell of barn-stormers and stars and many amusing adventures to relate. He writes not only with considerable charm but with a genuine modesty as well; his book is as amusing a volume of theatrical memoirs as has been seen in some time.

Gossip of the 17th and 18th Centuries. By John Beresford. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.75.

A group of essays describing persons and incidents thoroughly characteristic of their time. The two papers which are based upon unpublished material are trivial, but in the best, January 30, 1649 (the execution of Charles I) and Anne Hyde, the author utilizes familiar contemporary and modern sources to sketch a story and evoke an atmosphere.

Drama

Melodrama and Aspirations

"IDEAS" are common enough in current plays. The reigning mode is inclined to favor them and if the playwright, as is probable enough, does not happen to possess any of his own they can be borrowed as easily as any other theatrical material. Ideas, however, even stolen ones, unfortunately require to be at least assimilated if anything is to be made of them, and since the typical playwright really regards them as unnecessary nuisances brought into favor by tiresome aliens they tend, in his hands, to become only excrescences upon his native melodrama or his homely sentiment, and they resolutely refuse to grow into plays in their own right. The result is an effect not unlike that produced by the formula of the more pretentious movies: a symbolical title, a few highbrow inserts, and an abundance of the train wrecks and fist fights which constitute the realness of the piece. Theoretically the play has an idea, actually it possesses little more than a few pretentious labels.

Without any unfairness, "The Great Music" at the Earl Carroll Theater may be taken as a typical example of the thing under discussion. Martin Brown, the author, is an extremely capable writer of colorful melodrama, but he has no real passion for thought. He has merely been moved, like so many contemporary writers, by a vague feeling that he should deal somehow with great things, and accordingly he has borrowed, probably from "The Moon and Sixpence," a highly dramatic idea without having any great interest in it for its own sake or any real capacity for developing what he has appropriated. He starts out bravely with a young composer who decides, for the sake of the development of his genius, to break his word to his father and elope to Paris with a married woman who preaches the Gauguin morality and promises to aid him in the development of his talent. For a brief moment in the second act the author comes to grips with the intellectual and moral aspects of his theme and trembles for a time upon the edge of the genuine drama of ideas when he shows the hero realizing for the first time that his mistress has aided him, not because she really sets great store by his music, but because, like his parents, she was willing to use any means to hold him for herself. This scene is even well written, but it completely exhausts both the mind and the patience of the author so that he calls a quick curtain to his rescue and then plunges into a series of melodramatic events which, however interesting they may be in themselves, have nothing whatever to do with the problem in hand. Doubtless the scene in the harlot's quarter of Port Said, in which the drugged hero drags himself from a chair and fires a deadly bullet into the belly of a ruffian just about to commit a rape upon the sentimental prostitute, will send a shiver down the most blasé spine; doubtless also the closing act, which introduces the inevitable dark-skinned vamp of the Marquesas, has also its elements of simple appeal. But neither the one nor the other grows out of the supposed theme of the play or illuminates it in any way.