

Slabs of the Sunburnt West

Slabs of the Sunburnt West, by Carl Sandburg. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company. \$1.50.

"And as imagination bodies forth
 "The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
 "Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
 "A local habitation and a name."

THE nothing to which the pen of Mr. Carl Sandburg gives a local habitation and a name is neither airy nor truly nothing, but as a giver of shapes to the unknown things of the imagination it stands very high. He seems to have an especial gift, a capacity for giving color and substance to the facts of human life and the circumstances of its development in a new nation. He is a poet of great distinction. Personality, genius, perspicacity, fire, love of life, Sandburg has them all and what is more he is able to make his readers apprehend them and the delight he takes in their use. Why then is he no more than a poet of great distinction? Why is *Slabs of the Sunburnt West* on the same level of excellence as *Chicago Poems*, or even, as I think, a little lower? Perhaps it is that he has acquired such mastery over that blending process which makes of language a music played to the listener that underlies all flesh and blood, that he can make a false note seem a true one. Such a dangerous ability implies a remoteness from the Tower of Ivory which I do not believe he would be happy to support.

Mr. Sandburg has formed a conception of the vernacular which, as such, is thoroughly acceptable. He is, however, constantly confronted with the difficulty of reconciling this chosen speech with the formal requirements of his manner of composition. The beauty which Mr. Sandburg originates is in a strict sense a vernacular beauty, yet to me it seems marred and often effaced by his fear that dignity will estrange it. At such times he is like a shy schoolboy who makes preposterous and foolish remarks because he is afraid of being thought serious.

If, as his publisher declares on the jacket of this volume, Mr. Sandburg enjoys the writing of poetry as an art and a religion, he should take pains to avoid giving the impression that he enjoys it as a game of poker in which fifty percent of everything is left to chance. If poetry is worth writing it is worth working over. I thoroughly believe that a speedy divorce arranged between Mr. Sandburg and the *Chicago Daily News* would do much to give the world a great poet in exchange for a fine poet certain to die with his promise unfulfilled. Poems like *The Windy City* and *Slabs of the Sunburnt West*, in which a real beauty and an almost apprehensible style are achieved through the imaginative use of the vernacular idiom, are distinct and very splendid additions to the literature of the American language.

RAYMOND HOLDEN.

Grant

Ulysses S. Grant, by Louis H. Coolidge. Centenary Edition With Introduction by Major-General James G. Harbord, and With Illustrations. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. \$4.00.

IT is pleasant to have an excuse to call attention to this reprint of Mr. Coolidge's notable volume on Grant in the American Statesmen Series. Professor Dodd's intro-

duction is replaced by one by General Harbord, the margins are widened and a few mediocre portraits are introduced; otherwise there is no change, except in price.

As is well known, this biography devotes two-thirds of its judicious, scholarly and well-written pages to the life of Grant after Appomattox. It does not succeed in making the Presidency more than an appendix to the General's campaign, but it unifies his career by a clear presentation of his character. Both as President and General and even as Secretary of War under Johnson, we see him as a simple, stubborn, self-confident, persistent, reticent man. We can even understand why his passionate disdain of Johnson blinded his eyes to a policy of reconstruction which accorded with his nature more readily than his own and robbed him for a while of the magnanimity and tolerance which have brought him his noblest fame. It is well to have a biography of Grant which does not attempt to rival his own marvelous *Memoirs* and the detailed accounts of Badeau; Mr. Coolidge does for Grant much the same service that Mr. Bigelow has done for Franklin; but for all that the first third of the book is its most impressive portion; one enjoys a concise and masterly record of great achievement, with its inevitable revelation of great personal characteristics in an unprepossessing spirit, far more than an apology for a mediocre Presidency, even though the Presidency has been ignorantly defamed and the apology is worthy and judicious.

A. W. VERNON.

In Defense of Satyrs

Mr. Antiphilos, Satyr, by Remy de Gourmont, translated from the French by John Howard. New York: Lieber and Lewis. \$2.00.

FOR sheer delight you will have to go far before you come across another such book as this one of Remy de Gourmont's. The afternoon of a faun grown somewhat contemplative—could it be otherwise?

"I reread what I have written with a sense of pleasure, change a few commas and amuse myself hugely," writes Mr. Antiphilos, satyr, resting his writing pad upon his shaggy knees. Although he is about eight thousand and nine hundred years old he is frank to confess that he does not know women very well. Alas! that is his undoing. He to whom the seasons mean more than metaphysics allows himself to be metamorphosized. He leaves his dearly beloved grotto for the bewildering novelty of the villa. "I would have really liked to sacrifice once more to the sylvan Aphrodite, but Cydalise said that the train would not wait for us."

Not without a certain doubtful happiness does he find the life of a domesticated faun. But he feels cabined, a sense of diminishing divinity. He can no longer accept life as it is offered. Still he keeps silent, "imbibing the benefits of civilization without a word." Comes a day, however, when Cydalise goes away, forgetting to lock him in.

With his friend, Diogenes, he takes to the road. And yet there is ennui. The immanent risk of becoming a Christian satyr looms big. There is nothing but flight left for him, back to the "old, consecrated woods . . . to the land of Theocritus." Mr. Antiphilos feels forced to admit that men are as incomprehensible as women—though not in quite the same way.

The flimsiest of gossamer plots, yet altogether sufficient to hold the delicacy of de Gourmont's satire. His is a gentle cynicism grown mellow with much understanding of men and things. "Yahoos! That is the feeling you all give me. Do not be offended! There are women, there are men among the Yahoos."

Reading this book one catches a glimpse of the modern sophisticated pagan sorrowing for his lost innocence. And it is all very melancholy, this seeking of sylvan haunts and the simple realities of an Arcadian dream, in one to whom "all things are equal in absurdity." Very melancholy, and in the case of Mr. Antiphilos, Satyr, very beautiful, like an autumn afternoon.

Let there be praise, in passing, for the translator. Mr. John Howard has done an exceptionally good piece of work in catching the delicate nuances, the lucid clarity so native to the French, and particularly to that master subtilist, Remy de Gourmont.

EDWIN SEAVER.

The Index for Volume XXXI, which was completed with our issue No. 403, has been printed separately. It will be mailed on request, post free, to any subscriber who will send his name and address on a post card directed to the New Republic, 421 West 21st Street, New York City.

Contributors

JOHN DEWEY is the author of *Studies in Logical Theory, School and Society, and Democracy and Politics*. His most recent book is *Human Nature and Conduct, An Introduction to Social Psychology*.

OLIVER MADOX HUEFFER is an English writer and war correspondent. At one time he was editor of the *Onlooker*, as also of the *Throne*. He has been on the staff of various periodicals in England and the United States. During the European war he served in the Somme campaign. He is the author of *In Arcady, Love's Disguises* and other books.

CHARLES MERZ was graduated from Yale in 1915, and was subsequently managing editor of *Harper's Weekly* and publicity manager for the Progressive Party Convention in 1916. He has been on the editorial staff of the *New Republic* and later of the *New York World*. He is now in Europe.

MCALISTER COLEMAN was graduated from Columbia in 1909, was a reporter on the *New York Sun* for four years and is now in the advertising business.

WALTER WHEELER COOK, until recently a professor of law in the Columbia University School of Law, is now a professor of law in Yale University Law School. He is a graduate of Columbia, was president of the Association of American Law Schools, 1916, and is the author of *The Powers of Courts of Equity*, and a frequent contributor to legal periodicals.

EUGENE S. BAGGER is a New York journalist, and was formerly foreign editor of the *New York Tribune*.

SAMUEL C. CHEW is a professor of English at Bryn Mawr College, and is now in England. He is the author of *Thomas Hardy, Poet and Novelist*.

LOIS G. SUTHERLAND SPEAR is a graduate of the University of Chicago and was formerly secretary of the women's club house there. At present she is doing research on industrial problems from the psychological angle.

RAYMOND HOLDEN is the author of *Granite and Alabaster*, a volume of verse to be published in October by the Macmillan Co. He has contributed book reviews and special articles to the *New Republic* and other periodicals.

A. W. VERNON is professor of biography at Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota, and author of the *Cambridge History of American Literature and Turning Points in Church History*.

EDWIN SEAVER is a graduate of Harvard, a former editor of *The Harvard Magazine* and *The Proletarian*, who is at present doing publicity work in New York. He is a frequent contributor to the *Literary Review* of the *New York Evening Post*.

Important Recent Dutton Books

An Astounding Tale of Daring Adventure

BEASTS, MEN AND GODS

By FERDINAND OSSENDOWSKI

Dr. Ossendowski, a Pole whose life had been that of a scientist, a Professor, a prominent public official in old Russia, was forced to fly from Bolshevik assassins into the wild life of the Yenisei forests, in a sub-arctic winter with practically no outfit but an ax, a rifle and some cartridges. His story of a marvellous journey of thousands of miles, of hairbreadth escapes, and of visits to the inmost sanctuary of "the living Buddha," is told with obvious sincerity, with the lucid precision of a scientist, and with a restraint that is amazing.

DR. ALBERT SHAW, *Editor of The Review of Reviews*, says of it: "I consider it the most extraordinarily interesting manuscript I have passed under my eye for years."

Price, \$3.00, postage extra.

Exceptionally interesting importations

The Prime Ministers of Britain, 1721-1921

By CLIVE BIGHAM

During the two centuries which have elapsed since Walpole, who was first called Prime Minister, there have been thirty-six holders of this office, and they represent a fascinating study in character. In this useful and entertaining volume Mr. Bigham gives a brilliant biographical and character sketch of each. Handsomely illustrated from photographs. \$8.00

Queen Elizabeth's Maids of Honour

By VIOLET A. WILSON

Intimate picture of the Court and its frequenters in the days of the great Elizabeth with entertaining biographies of the various members of the circle of beautiful and accomplished girls from the best families in England with whom Elizabeth surrounded herself. Illustrated with twelve portraits, nearly all of which are gathered from inaccessible private collections. \$6.00

Up Against It in Nigeria

By LANGA LANGA

A fascinating record of the author's thirteen years experience as a political officer in West Africa. He introduces the reader personally to the toilers, official and commercial, who have faced the despondencies, the dangers and the changing fortunes of that interesting land. Well illustrated. \$5.00

Out of the World North of Nigeria

By ANGUS BUCHANAN

A stirring narrative of the author's journey through the country known as *Territoire Militaire du Niger* of the Western Sudan, practically unknown to English-speaking people and almost virgin to exploration of any kind. Strange scenes and strange people, unknown species and subspecies of birds, butterflies, moths and mammals are described in this unusual book. Illustrated from photographs. \$6.00

Literature and Life

By E. B. OSBORN

A selection of things seen, heard and read, essays and occasional papers, by the Literary Editor of the *London Morning Post*. \$2.50

The Problem of War and Its Solution

By JOHN E. GRANT

The Biological and Historical aspects of the problem are briefly but adequately surveyed; and the Solution, the application of which is within the range of practical politics, is clearly and simply stated. \$5.00

Socialism and Character

By HENRY STURT

"It is a pleasure," says the *Manchester Guardian*, "to find a talented philosopher, who has known two generations of political change, still optimistic as to the future . . . the ring of hope in this book, quiet but confident, is often convincing and always invigorating." \$3.00

Any Bookstore can supply these; or if not, they can be had, postage extra, from

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

681 Fifth Avenue, New York