

"disclosures be confined to matters the publication of which can now be of no detriment to the State," and because of the British tradition of being "scrupulously niggardly in imparting information as to proceedings in the Cabinet" (page 21); and partly because Mr. Asquith would seem to have read only a few books on the subject, mostly memoirs and apologies like those of the ex-Kaiser, and not to have addressed himself to the important problems raised by recent documentary publications. He is still content to write as if we know no more now than we did in 1914. Germany is still solely responsible. "To fix the ultimate responsibility for the war a study of the officially published diplomatic correspondence is in itself still sufficient" (page 278). "Considerable additions have since come to light," he adds, "but they have left even less doubt than existed before as to the true apportionment of responsibility." That he can make such a statement is explained by the fact that he himself has evidently not read any of these "considerable additions," except as they have been reproduced in distorted and fragmentary form, for their own purposes, by Kautsky and Poincaré. Yet one would hardly go to either of these writers for an unprejudiced statement of German pre-war policy.

Mr. Asquith's book suffers also from the fact that he deals almost exclusively with Germany; he says little about Austria, and still less about Russia and Serbia. He knows nothing about the true date and reasons for the orders for general mobilization in Russia. Winston Churchill and Lloyd George had begun to lead one to think that English leaders had emancipated themselves from the fiction of Germany's sole responsibility. Mr. Asquith puts us back in the murky atmosphere of war propaganda. He writes as a politician seeking to make a case, not as a historian searching to know the truth. He who would know the real genesis of the war will not find it in Mr. Asquith's pages, but will turn rather to a well informed and well balanced account, like G. P. Gooch's *History of Modern Europe, 1878-1919*.

SIDNEY B. FAY.

Fiction Fair and Foul

Justice of the Peace, by Frederick Niven. New York: Boni and Liveright. \$2.50.

The Lonely Furrow, by Maud Diver. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. \$2.50.

One of the Guilty, by W. L. George. New York: Harper and Brothers. \$2.00.

The Hopeful Journey, by Beatrice Kean Seymour. New York: Thomas Seltzer. \$2.00.

The Hope of Happiness, by Meredith Nicholson. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.00.

Don Juan, by Ludwig Lewisohn. New York: Boni and Liveright. \$2.00.

Arlie Gelston, by Roger L. Sergel. New York: B. W. Huebsch. \$2.00.

IT is a highly commendable practice to republish worthy novels which the sands of time have almost buried. There should be a corps of literary excavators engaged in this salvage; and we suggest that a prize given for the best novel ten years after publication would be a satisfactory form for the next endowment of literature to take. *Justice of the Peace* is a revival, introduced with enthusiastic prefaces by Messrs. Hugh Walpole and Christopher

Morley, and reverberations off stage by Miss Rebecca West. We are not quite prepared, however, to give the book first money. Possibly Messrs. Boni and Liveright and their henchmen do protest too much. There is the theme of parents and children, with a mother who runs Mrs. Pontifex a good second. There is Glasgow, seen with an artist's eye. There is an interesting background furnished by an authoritative study of the contemporary art of illustration. Above all, there is a refreshing absence of fictional pretension about the book—until Mr. Niven, without warning, has his hero, on the day of marriage and the opening of his triumphant exhibition, fall by the pen of his mother—a letter to the newspaper about nude female models being the deadly weapon.

The Lonely Furrow is Tennysonian in its theme, "Of Love who never found his earthly close," and in its solution, a renunciation tempered by mystical union. It is new in its background, northern India of the English occupation, and this background of the gigantic Himalayas and the lovely vale of Kashmir gives a magnificence and splendor in response to which humanity reveals itself in action as august and fine. The social background is likewise heroic. Mrs. Diver in the main keeps away from the controversial questions of modern India, but she makes it clear that her heart is with the fine traditions of British rule—individual responsibility, devotion and sacrifice to a subject people. With so much of elevation in theme and background it is appropriate that the style should be of a dignity beyond daily use and wont; but we find it hard to put up with such colloquialism as "One's sins may seem as scarlet, while one's motives are as unimpeachable as cotton wool."

Mr. George has established an easy formula for the novel, which may be described as setting up a character and conducting it through a series of closely related incidents, illustrating a phase of life, to a novelist's ending. In *A Bed of Roses* the phase of life was courtisanship; in *Caliban*, it was the press; in *One of the Guilty*, it is crime. Mr. George is invariably skilful in establishing his character, and thus promises more than he performs. After a little his attention flags; he becomes slipshod and slovenly. Clearly the material is too soft, the method too easy for a craftsman who could work in the solid substance and intricate pattern of *The Second Blooming* and *Blind Alley*. He needs the stimulus of difficulty. But meanwhile his pot boils.

Mrs. Seymour is a scrupulous performer who more than fulfills her promises. Her fundamental pattern is the family. She joins Mr. Forster, Miss E. M. Jones, Miss Sinclair, and Miss Delafield who have presented English upper middle-class life at the beginning of the twentieth century with the skill and zest which Miss Austen brought to it at the beginning of the nineteenth. In *Intrusion* Mrs. Seymour gave us a family novel which for brilliancy and penetration is no mean competitor of *Howard's End* or *The Tree of Heaven*. In *The Hopeful Journey* she has lengthened her perspective to include three generations, and deepened her intention to a kind of historical criticism, which is explicit in her reference to contemporary events and implicit in her theme—the journey of which the undying hope is in youth.

The initial advantage which the English novelist of manners possesses over the American by virtue of having a civilization to write about, is obvious if we place *The Hope of Happiness* beside *The Hopeful Journey*. Mr. Nicholson's serious characters murmur: "It's terrible to

be lonely. And you are so big and strong; you can help me if you will," or "The only God I can feel is a spirit hovering all about, watching and loving us—the God of the Blue Horizons," to which his hero responds mentally: "Her phrase added majesty to the universe, made the invisible God intelligible and credible." With such people it is hardly fair to blame the author for the thinness of social life implied by a lecture at the art institute—"A famous painter was to speak and it promised to be an interesting occasion." It is a note of the life discussed by Mr. Nicholson that his characters cannot take a drink without having it recorded, but again Mr. Nicholson is not to blame. We do think, however, that he is to blame for a garish bit of fiction flung across his book—a mother who sends her perfectly honorably born son to live in the city with his illegitimate father—a multi-millionaire—to watch over him and protect him. Not much can be made of such a situation in Indianapolis, and Mr. Nicholson does not make much of it.

Mr. Lewisohn has two theses, one, Milton's view of marriage and divorce, the other Don Juan's view of life. The second theme is introduced by way of reprisal against a society which will not accept the first; but Mr. Lewisohn and his hero treat both with the same conviction. We are left a little in doubt whether they are really Milton or Don Juan or both. The book has the characteristic fault of the thesis novel; the problem is real but the characters who dramatize it are not. They are puppets speaking in Mr. Lewisohn's falsetto.

Arlie Gelston is encouragingly free from second-rate fictional devices. In its small town middle western realism it recalls *West of the Water Tower*, but it is stronger and bolder. The story of Arlie's seduction, pregnancy and parturition is the most detailed and authoritative treatment in American fiction of the tragedy of the primæval curse. The author remains true to Arlie and to his method, in his narrative of her later experience. It is not his fault that she is not always in an interesting condition. His limitations are biological, not artistic; and he fully earns the commendation of Messrs. Dreiser, Anderson and Hecht who, like the herald angels, sing together on the jacket at his advent.

R. M. L.

A Procession of Masks

A Procession of Masks, by Herbert S. Gorman. Boston: B. J. Brimmer Company. \$2.00.

THE essays in this volume, as the title happily implies, take their subjects under the guise of maskers, people whose art is a thing worn for the world to know them by, as a mask covers and reveals and makes more abstract and memorable the figure behind it. Swinburne, Van Gogh, Arthur Symons, Lafcadio Hearn, Emily Dickinson and others are brought past; but the best revelation of the lot is Edwin Arlington Robinson. A long essay on Mr. Robinson, his moods and his work, is carried through with more security and sympathy and comprehension than any discussion that I have seen about him. Many fine transcriptions of this poet's quality appear under the poetic hand that here writes of him; and Mr. Gorman is saying remarkable things when he writes of Mr. Robinson's lack of Latin fire and of how "when he is passionate, it is with a cerebral consciousness of the devouring flame," or when he points out the process by which even in Mr. Robinson's

early work "meditation extinguished emotionalism," or when he speaks of how at times "the tensely-packed thought marches past, beating inexorably upon the brain, and then comes the high gust of pictorial poetry that illuminates the entire proceeding." After the Robinson essay the best part of the volume is the last. Here are recorded the intimate reflections of one of the younger generation; speaking delicately and beautifully of his youth in Springfield, his days in the library there, his change of heart; and passing from all that to one's elders nowadays, what they think of the new generation, and what the new generation thinks of them; what it dreams for itself, and what joy there is in riding the wind of a new era. This, the last mask of all the procession, is a brave and touching thing.

S. Y.

Religious Experience of John Humphrey Noyes, Founder of the Oneida Community. Compiled and edited by George Wallingford Noyes. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$2.50.

IN the midst of the dolls which simper and smirk before the reviewing stand, it is refreshing to see a real man stride up boldly, look the judge scornfully in the face and go his unbending way. It is hard to conceive a book more out of touch with modern problems than this first half of the life of the founder of the Oneida Community. It is not only a headlong dive into the sea of mysticism—where von Hügel, Dean Inge, David Lawrence and H. G. Wells disport lustily—but into the Sargasso sea of perfectionism. Think of these weeds to swim among, grown so high that they stick up as chapter headings—The Second Coming of Christ, Reinterpretation of Prophecy, Security and Freedom from Law! Lashings of soul, renunciation of home ties, the boiling foam of antinomianism, weird manipulations of scripture, wanderings into lunacy, await the hardy soul who dares the adventure to which this book beckons. But there is rich treasure for the modern man who can ride those billows. There is a style as perspicuous as Franklin's, a humor as unforced and unexpected as Cowper's, a moving sincerity and a wanton logic. Best of all, there is an escape from the weeds, a swirling off from the rocks and the making of a harbor. The book unfortunately closes before we are permitted to see the outlines of the Oneida Community but not before we have renewed our faith in those who launch forth into the deep.

A. W. V.

Contributors

- JOHN W. OWENS has for a number of years been a political reporter on the staff of the Baltimore Sun.
- W. E. BURGHARDT DU BOIS was professor of economics and history at Atlanta University from 1896-1910, since which time he has been director of the Department of Publicity and Research for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the editor of the *Crisis*. He is the author of a number of books dealing with the Negro problem. Mr. Du Bois has recently attended sessions of the Pan-African Congress in London and in Lisbon. At present he is visiting the West Coast of Africa.
- LUCY MARTIN DONNELLY, professor of English at Bryn Mawr College, spent last year travelling in India and the East.
- EDMUND WILSON was formerly on the editorial staff of *Vanity Fair* and later of the *New Republic*.
- SIDNEY B. FAY, professor of European history at Smith College, has contributed articles to the *Nation*, the *Independent* and the *American Historical Review*.