

nique that sometimes seems to lose all meter—these are the marks of Yeats's later work. The glow of poetry is on them, however; we always feel that Yeats has much to say and that he says it in a manner peculiar to himself and distinguished.

It is from the hand of such a workman as this that "Four Plays for Dancers"² comes, a book that will bring the utmost delight to the reader. Just as the wave of Yeats's inspiration seemed to falter, to be coming slowly to a halt upon the high, sandy beach of time, comes this new wave, mounting in its splendor and foaming over the limits that capricious criticism had set. First of all, it should be noted that the four plays in this beautifully fashioned and illustrated book—"At the Hawk's Well," "The Only Jealousy of Emer," "The Dreaming of the Bones," and "Calvary"—were occasioned by an intellectual urge. The great interest of Yeats in the theater has never lessened since those early days when he was instrumental in forming the small beginnings of the Abbey Theater group. He has always been an intelligent, and sometimes inspired, experimenter and innovator. It was to be expected that when he came across some excellent translations of the Japanese *Noh* dramas, probably Ezra Pound's arrangements of Ernest Fenellosa's translations and notes, that the idea of adapting the form to Irish and other subjects should appeal to him. There is a spirit in the Japanese *Noh* drama that must be close to the brooding mind of Yeats. Quite often these plays dramatized an atmosphere more than an authentic plot action.

These Japanese dramas (*Noh* meaning "performance") are of almost religious significance. There is a faint similarity in their construction to the Greek drama. The subjects treated are generally religious or legendary, and quite often the action is concerned with the results of things, and not with the things themselves. Thus long after a character may be dead the action of the *Noh* drama may immortalize the place where he died by a stately action, accompanied by music, giving the aftermath of the character's influence on life. Supernatural characters sometimes are introduced. Always there is grave dancing and singing and the characters all wear elaborately carved masks which express the rôles.

Yeats has taken this form and changed it somewhat. For instance, he has introduced three musicians in each of his four plays who explain the action. They do not wear masks. It is impossible to attempt any descriptions of the plots of these interesting experiments, for the plots are mere utilities. It is the remarkable atmosphere of each play in its entirety that makes each effort a distinguished composition. They are compact with poetry, suffused with a

strange, trance-like magic that renders these figures characters out of time. They move and speak, not like human beings, but as solemn bits of that mysterious liturgy called life. In "The Dreaming of the Bones" we find the First Musician setting the mood with this song:

Why does my heart beat so?
Did not a shadow pass?
It passed but a moment ago.
Who can have trod in the grass?
What rogue is night-wandering?
Have not old writers said
That dizzy dreams can spring
From the dry bones of the dead?
And many a night it seems
That all the valley fills
With those fantastic dreams.
They overflow the hills,
So passionate is a shade,
Like wine that fills to the top
A gray-green cup of jade,
Or maybe an agate cup.

And what an echo of the old Yeats of the nineties is to be found in these lines, taken from the same play:

These crazy fingers play
A wandering airy music;
Our luck is withered away,
And wheat in the wheat-ear withered,
And the wind blows it away.

Yet except for occasional flares that old Yeats has vanished. "Four Plays for Dancers" is a book that suggests him. If ever *Noh* plays shadowed forth the spirit of places, these four dramas shadow forth the spirit of the place where the young Yeats once found his dreams. He has come out of that cloud-pale land of mystery where Niamh once cried:

Away, come away:
Empty your heart of its mortal dream.

The wistfulness of mortality is in the heart of Yeats now. He is growing old, and the fact is apparent in his poetry, though never through a lessening of inspiration. It is in a changed attitude. He stands in silhouette against the Celtic twilight listening as "the years like great black oxen tread the world."

THE NEW BOOKS

FICTION

GREAT PRINCE SHAN (THE). By E. Phillips Oppenheim. Little, Brown & Co., Boston. \$2.

This time the "prince of plots" puts the scene of his story forward to 1934. This cleverly makes it possible to have the international plotting and counter-plotting at which he is so adept relate to the "next war." Russia, Germany, and the East almost resolve to conquer western Europe, but desist because the wisest and most powerful man in the world, Prince Shan of China, convinces himself by a visit to England (now supine, pacifist, and helpless) that the result would be an easy conquest but a fatal error for the world's future. As a story the book is one of the author's best; and behind the story there are suggestions for serious thought.

GREENSEA ISLAND. By Victor Bridges. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York. \$1.90.

A capital tale of love, mystery, and villainy. All the incidents center around a charming island to which a bluff young ship's mate falls heir by an uncle's death only to find himself heir also to plots of revenge aroused by his evil uncle's misdeeds.

WRONG MR. RIGHT (THE). By Berta Ruck. Dodd, Mead & Co., New York. \$1.75.

Lively and amusing. The kaleidoscopic misunderstandings all grow out of the invention by the heroine of an imaginary young man, rich and benevolent, who is credited with doing for poor and proud ladies all the nice things that she does herself.

ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

UNFINISHED RAINBOWS, AND OTHER ESSAYS. By George Wood Anderson. The Abingdon Press, New York. \$1.25.

These are sermons, not essays; that is, they are written not to entertain, nor to

instruct, but to persuade. They are not didactic in form, but are didactic in spirit. A moral purpose pervades them. The titles of the essays—"Unfinished Rainbows," "Gathering Sunsets," "Beyond the Curtains of Clouds"—indicate their literary quality. It would not be unjust to term them prose poems. They are not always self-expressive. They are too deliberate, perhaps too artificial, to be the highest poetry. But they are short, undogmatic, and may well serve the purpose of sermons to readers who are shut out from church services or fail to get from the pulpit the inspiration which they need.

TRAVEL AND DESCRIPTION

OUR HAWAII. By Charmian Kittredge London (Mrs. Jack London). New and Revised Edition. The Macmillan Company, New York. \$3.

This revised edition of a popular book is full of the atmosphere of the South Seas and of enthusiastic appreciation of Hawaii. Charmian London always writes with rhapsodical love of her subject, and this book will entrance those who admire a corresponding style of descriptive writing.

WILD BUSH TRIBES OF TROPICAL AFRICA. By G. Cyril Claridge. Illustrated. The J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia.

Here is a sympathetic study of the natives of West Central Africa, keen in its insight, detailed in its description, and frank in its statements. The data collected regarding the "souls of black folk" in the Congo region are amazing in amount, variety, and minuteness. The story of the treatment of the natives by the Portuguese is one of the most tragic in the annals of Negro oppression by conscienceless traders—but hardly more revolting than the stories of the natives' barbarity in dealing with their own people.

² Four Plays for Dancers. By William Butler Yeats. The Macmillan Company, New York. \$2.

CONTRIBUTORS' GALLERY



HERBERT S. GORMAN has been associated with newspapers in Springfield, Boston, and New York. He is now contributing assistant to the New York "Times" Magazine and Book Review Section. He has published poems and critical essays in many of the leading magazines.

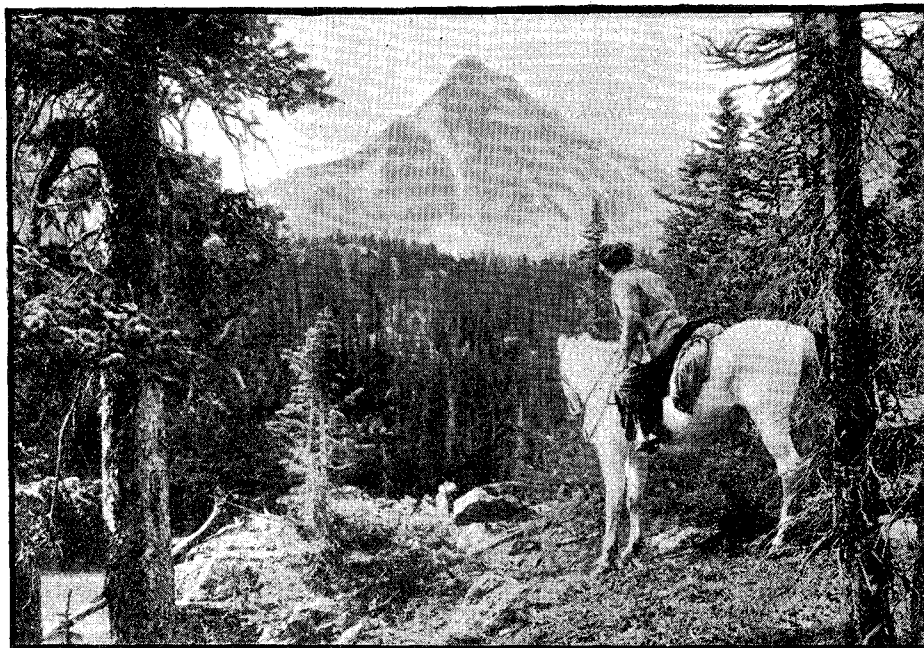
NEWTON FUESSLE contributes an article on the controversy that is raging between the Amateur Athletic Union and various other athletic organizations. The article is based on an interview with General Palmer E. Pierce, who is President of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Mr. Fuessle's article brings the controversy before the public for the first time.

ALINE KILMER is the widow of the late Joyce Kilmer, who was killed in action in the World War. Mrs. Kilmer is the author of "Vigils" and "Candles that Burn." She has previously contributed to The Outlook.

MYRTLE and GORDON LAW, of Springfield, Massachusetts, give in an article entitled "Gandhi in Jail" an account of an hour spent with the great Indian Nationalist.

EDWARD KNEELAND PARKINSON is a lover of outdoors. He has spent a number of years in the country raising grain, hay, fruit, and live stock, and is a frequent contributor to outdoor magazines. He was at one time on the staff of the "Country Gentleman" and for four years with the New York "Evening Post" as writer of the "Amateur Countryman" column. He is the author of two books, "A Guide to the Country Home" and "The Practical Country Gentleman."

ELMER T. PETERSON is associate editor of the Wichita "Beacon," of which Governor H. J. Allen is publisher and editor-in-chief. He has been closely associated with Governor Allen in the study of industrial questions, and was present at all the important events having to do with the Industrial Court. Mr. Peterson was formerly on the reporter-editorial staff of the Kansas City "Star," and previous to that editor of a Kansas weekly, the Cimarron "Jacksonian." He was born on a farm near



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