

everything else except spirituality. Surfeit "means excess and overload in life and in nature and invariably ends in subsidence and decline." Just what form the inevitable retrogression may take is not made clear. There is no suggestion of a yellow peril, or a peril of any other color, and there is the cheerful admission that "retrogression implies also inherent forces of progression, and, though civilizations and nations become extinct, the human forces eventually find new outlets and move forward to the formation of a new civilization." On the face of the matter as presented there would thus seem to be no great cause for alarm.

Mr. Stoddard³ finds much amiss and senses a grave danger. "Never before in all its long history," he writes, "has mankind confronted such alternatives of triumph and disaster." The quadrennial platforms of the political parties usually have it so, and why should not a doctor of social science? It is not, however, saturation that troubles him, but maladjustment. This is a scientific age. Mankind has worked wonders with its material achievements, and its outstanding leaders have developed a new spirit of inquiry which has for its goal demonstrable truth. But the great mass is bewildered by the new knowledge and knows not where to turn. The method and spirit of science touch it hardly at all, and it heedlessly gives itself to emotionalism. The low-grade elements of the population are rapidly increasing, the intelligent elements diminishing or at best remaining stationary. A catastrophe would seem to be impending. But though the vista is dark, there is a way out—the cultivation of an intellectual and emotional attitude which the author terms "Scientific Humanism." Unfortunately, not much is told us of this new philosophy and nothing at all as to how the surging masses are to be persuaded to adopt it. Possibly it is just the thing we most need and just what the far-sighted have been hoping for; but until further specifications are spread abroad the expectation of relief from this quarter must be held in leash.

Perhaps most of the persons apprehensive about the future of civilization believe that the abolition of war would avert a breakdown. Mr. Bernstein, in "The Road to Peace,"⁴ discusses the prospects. His book is a collection of interviews given him during the last year by leading statesmen of Europe and

America, with considerable biographical material and an introduction summarizing the opinions expressed. He finds the consensus to be that the League of Nations and the World Court "constitute the best instrumentality for permanent peace and better comprehension among nations thus far devised," but that the outlawry of war cannot be fully assured until all the nations have been taken in. They will be, he believes, and his outlook is at least cheerful.

Very different is Mr. Fischer, with his "Oil Imperialism."⁵ His book is a shrill-voiced and furious indictment of all the "capitalist nations" in behalf of Soviet Russia. It appears that these "capitalist nations" and their industrial magnates are bedeviling the good and gentle Bolsheviks, and that in this despicable game they slumber not, neither do they sleep. They want Russian oil, and they mean to get it—peaceably if they must, but preferably by war. The argument from time to time takes on strange contradictions. Oil is a means toward war, but it is also a means toward peace. You can have it either way, according to the argumentative need. A book written in such a vein is not likely to be taken over-seriously.

A telling word for closer international relations is Mr. Redfield's "Dependent America."⁶ To those simple souls—Mr. Bertrand Russell included—who believe that America is sufficient unto herself a glance at the long list of essential commodities which we are compelled to import will be enlightening. It is an "interesting" book as well as an informing one, and even the tabloid newspaper addict may find bits of romance here and there to enthrall his attention. Take, for instance, sausage casings (of which we yearly import more than a million miles), or jute, or shellac, or the vegetable ivory button. Each has its little story. What it all amounts to is that each of us is united to all the rest of mankind by ties that affect every moment of our lives. The Government itself is dependent upon other peoples for some thirty "strategic" commodities, and during the war there were some two hundred commodities regarding which our position was at one time or another critical. To isolate ourselves would mean a descent in the social scale. "If we are to advance," concludes the author, "it must be by a closer sense of unity with all men everywhere and with a candid acknowledgment of common

duties, common obligations, common responsibilities."

Mr. Bretherton,⁷ an Englishman who has lived in the United States, has a merry time in writing his predictions of the United States of a hundred years from now. It is a nation that covers the ground from the Arctic Circle to Mexico, and it has two hundred million inhabitants, all of a new race, a perfect fusion of the tribes that now dwell within its limits. The intellectual and artistic capital, by the way, has shifted to some point in California. Mr. Bretherton writes too hastily, and with too much abandon, to be careful about particulars. He should recall, for one thing, that since the promulgation, May 31, 1913, of the Seventeenth Amendment, United States Senators have been elected by the people.

⁷ *Midas; or, The United States and the Future.* By C. H. Bretherton. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York. \$1.

Fiction

THE NOVELS OF L. ADAMS BECK. 5 vols. Dodd, Mead & Co., New York. \$2.50 each.

Interest is added to the publication of this collected edition of Oriental romances by the announcement that L. Adams Beck and E. Barrington (author of "The Glorious Apollo" and "The Chaste Diana") are one and the same person, and a woman at that. There is evidently a demand for tales of Eastern mysticism, fable, and occultism, for these stories, long and short, have followed one another rapidly. Perhaps the secret is that this author of the double-barreled pseudonym has a sense of humor and a real knack in story-telling. She mingles East and West, philosophy and modernism, in an odd but agreeable fashion.

THE QUESTION MARK. By M. Jaeger. The Macmillan Company, New York. \$2.

Miss Jaeger's utopian story "The Question Mark" differs from its many predecessors in accepting with a minimum of explanation the vast changes imagined in the twenty-second century, and emphasizing instead their effects upon human character and behavior. These are not good. For one thing, life is too easy; for another, with equal opportunity for everybody there is no merciful possibility of minimizing or concealing the difference between the intelligent and the stupid, and an unhappy class cleavage results, with contemptuous "Intellectuals" on one side and mere "Normals" on the other. Not a wholly successful novel, but ingenious and moderately interesting.

THE WHOLE STORY. By Elizabeth Bibesco. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York. \$2.

These short stories mark a distinct advance in literary art over the Princess's

³ *Scientific Humanism.* By Lothrop Stoddard. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. \$2.

⁴ *The Road to Peace.* By Herman Bernstein. Frank-Maurice, Inc., New York. \$2.50.

⁵ *Oil Imperialism. The International Struggle for Petroleum.* By Louis Fischer. International Publishers, New York. \$2.

⁶ *Dependent America.* By William C. Redfield. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. \$2.50.

earlier work. Some are subtle and pointed, others are subtle and disappointing, but all are written with an assured and practiced pen. "Red Hair" is as clever as Henry James could have made it—and twice as lucid.

The War

TOWARD THE FLAME. By Hervey Allen. The George H. Doran Company, New York. \$2.

A plain, straightforward narrative of a young American officer's war experience in 1918 in the Château-Thierry and Argonne drives. There is none of the "What Price Glory?" dramaticism and humor. The book is quiet, restrained, and convincing as to its reality.

Biography

AS A WOMAN THINKS. By Corra Harris. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. \$2.50.

Undeniably it is an art to write entertainingly and without egotism about one's self. Corra Harris in "As a Woman Thinks," the third book on this, her favorite theme, writes with the charm which characterized "The Circuit-Rider's Wife" and "My Book and Heart." All three are companionable books and thought-inspiring. We find her commenting on the cry, "Oh . . . that mine enemy had written a book!"

"David was no mean psychologist. No man ever wrote a book that did not betray him." No doubt David was a psychologist, for we must suppose him possessed of the wisdom which Solomon inherited from him in such generous measure. But the parson's wife is wrong in attributing this cry to David. It was Job who exclaimed, "Oh . . . that mine adversary had written a book!" and with a quite different purport, namely, that if the man who hated him had written a book he would still do him honor, for he did not hate his enemies.

The Scriptural injunction to turn the other cheek finds no response in this author. She sees no reason for "giving a man your coat also because he took your cloak. He will only go strutting around at your expense." One may answer that it depends upon the man; the right sort of man would be covered with confusion at such treatment, which, no doubt, is the design of the precept. Probably most of us have discovered that it is safer to apologize to an equal than to an inferior.

Mrs. Harris has some pungent things to say about the plight of the housekeeper with a talent worth cultivating. The talent aside, many a gentlewoman is concerned about whether to preserve her hands or preserve her fruit. But, given a talent, shall she pursue it at the expense of her household? If skillful, a woman may possibly ply both trades

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with some degree of satisfaction; but the best work in any line is done in the morning hours, and as a housewife feels that she must first set her house in order, when the opportunity comes for her personal work she is apt to find her faculties fagged. This author gives precedence to her writing. "Whatever happens to me, I will never do my own work. . . . Dishes and laundry are not mentioned in the Scriptures, therefore they are not obligatory. I will let my faith praise me rather than my doughnuts." She is aware that this is a moral limitation that "many better women will take a shot at. . . . Let them bang away. I would rather have my reputation as a domestic animal riddled than to have my dearer faculties destroyed by a flatiron or dishwater." There is certainly good sense in her conclusion on this matter, that a wise woman will remain the wife, never the servant, of her husband.

W. MURRAY CRANE, A MAN AND BROTHER:
By Solomon Bulkley Griffin. Little, Brown & Co., Boston. \$2.50.

This book, written by a distinguished newspaper man and lifelong friend of Mr. Crane, brings out sufficiently well the character of its subject; a character so admirable and engaging that few other men in public life have had so many warm friends. But it does not sufficiently exhibit Mr. Crane's remarkable abilities as business leader and statesman. Mr. Crane was one of the most modest and self-effacing of men; but scarcely any one of his day understood human nature better or won upon others more easily, very few exercised greater political influence. An adequate biography would include, besides eulogy, however deserved, of the "man and brother," an exposition and critical study of a political career so important.

Essays and Criticism

MY KEY TO LIFE. By Helen Keller. The Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York. \$1.

This little essay, the work of Miss Keller when she was still a student at Radcliffe College, is well written and glows from cover to cover with youthful idealism. Because of Miss Keller's entire sincerity and inability to express anything badly, the reviewer cannot abruptly dismiss it as simply another little patch of blue. But he does wish that the book had been the fruit of her courageous maturity rather than a youthful panegyric on goodness. Life is too infinitely serious for the human race to take it seriously; but, on the other hand, the world abounds at present in Christian Scientists and Pollyannas. Miss Keller is neither of these, and we are sure that her sense of humor and fine mind do not require the constant attendance of a bluebird as a mascot.

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Travel and Description

THE HEART OF THE MIDDLE EAST. By Richard Coke. Frank-Maurice, Inc., New York. \$5.

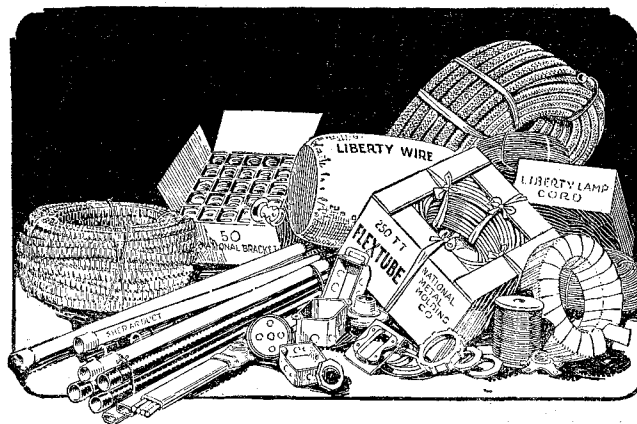
Whether it was the site of the Garden of Eden or not, Mesopotamia was undoubtedly the seat of a great civilization both before and after the rise of Mohammed. As the only new kingdom to come out of the World War, Iraq is full of interest and problems. Mr. Coke gives much detail to both. He finds the dominating Arab unchanged and unchangeable, but a gentleman and a man of honor. One gets the impression that this unfits him for a business career in competition with the management of enterprising European oil companies. The only hope for the permanency of King Feisal's domain Mr. Coke finds in British backing. If that fails, "the Middle East must immediately sink back into that chaos from which it has been the work of three centuries to rescue it."

Plays

THE GREAT GOD BROWN; THE FOUNTAIN; THE MOON OF THE CARIBBEES; AND SIX OTHER PLAYS OF THE SEA. By Eugene O'Neill. Boni & Liveright, New York. \$2.50.

In "The Great God Brown" Eugene O'Neill has attained a profundity exceeding that of any of his other performances; he has taken the soul as well as the body of Life to himself for ironic and pitying contemplation. Dion Anthony, the hero, is the artist, the impractical, spiritual element, submerged by the Billy Browns of a material world and so constituted that he, self-tortured, is unable to give out success, happiness, or peace. He, his wife Margaret, the friend, Brown, Cybel the prostitute, who represents the steadfast and healing qualities of Earth, all mask themselves as a means of bravado and self-protection. After Dion's death his mask is usurped by Brown, who has passionately loved Margaret; but in the end it betrays him, and Margaret, left alone with her three sons, now grown to manhood, goes back to her dream—her lost youth.

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