

no scrapes—as did his predecessor. There are no “good fellows” around him. They freeze up in his presence and depart, wondering if he is human. The truth is he is more so than they—they are the artificialities. It is a fact hardly to be questioned that Coolidge and Smith come nearer representing the people the way they want to be represented than any two men conspicuous in the public life of to-day. Smith makes a curious appeal to women; Coolidge is less fortunate in this respect.

Men who take good care of themselves may be called selfish, but they usually know how to take excellent care of the wants of others. Few of our great men have possessed this art. Politics is a game of niceties and must be played meticulously. This Coolidge does. If he does not “warm up” to everything that comes along, it does not mean that interest in items escapes him. He has permitted no one to rock the boat of Foreign Relations. The Knights of Columbus departed soothed from the summer

White House, but nothing has happened to Mexico. China does not excite him, and there is no sign that he is much moved by the unpopularity of bad American manners in Paris or Tokyo. In short, he will not trouble trouble even when trouble troubles him. If the country prefers golf to voting, he will sound no alarm, being pretty certain that a majority of those who do go to the polls will be for Calvin. They always have been, and nothing has yet occurred to change their minds.

The Book Table

Edited by EDMUND PEARSON

Thought and Deed

By W. J. GHENT

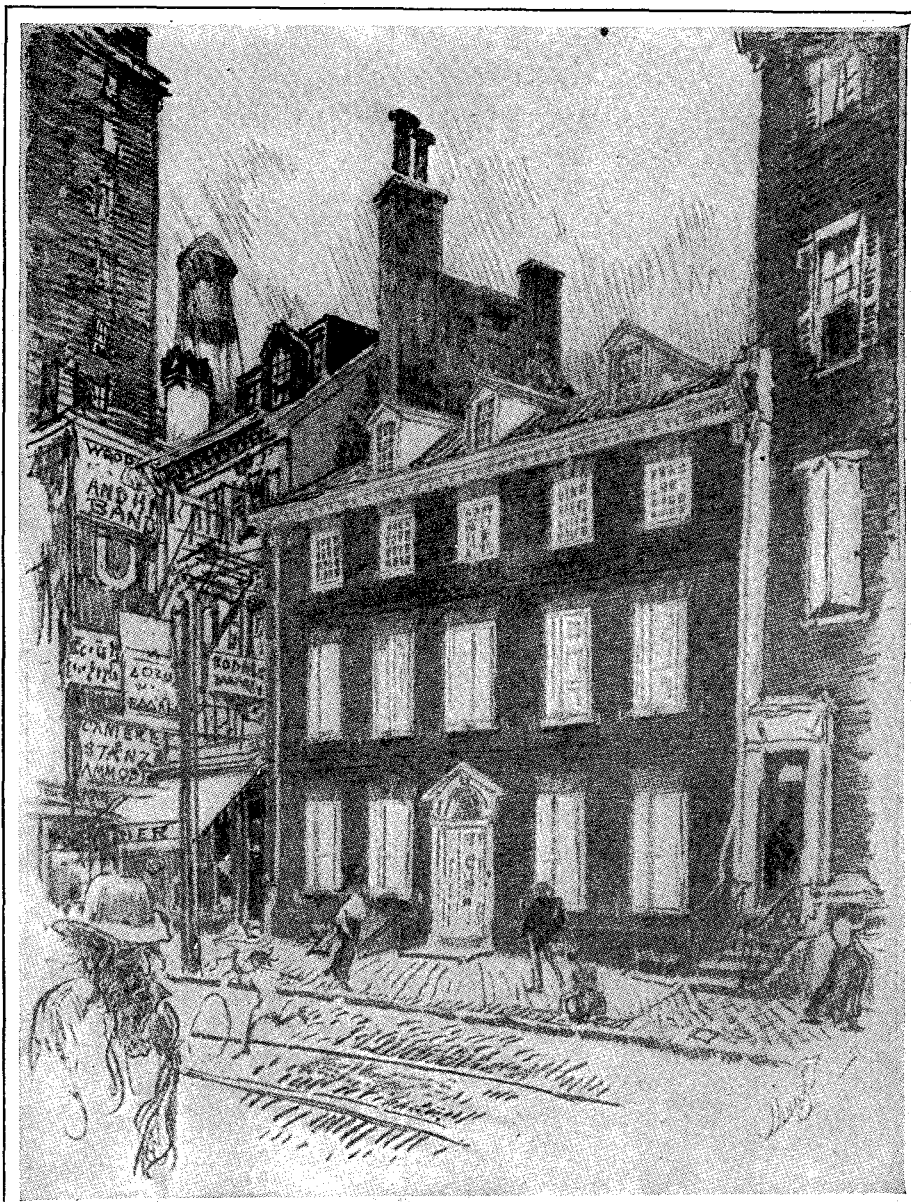
THERE are short cuts to learning, even if there be no royal road; and as the mass of recorded knowledge mounts with the years, the outline and the epitome attain an ever-increasing usefulness. Here are two compact abridgments of exceptional value. They are entertainingly written; they are modern in view-point and method; they are in the best sense scholarly. One of them traces from mediæval times the lineage of ideas and ideals; the other surveys from prehistoric times the record of cultural achievement.

Professor Randall's contribution is a history of the philosophic and social thought¹ of the Western peoples, and his starting-point is the thirteenth century. Though by that time they had created a society of “magnificent form and beauty,” it was a pioneer society, crude and ignorant and just emerging from a barbarous past. The civilization of these peoples has since then undergone more changes than any other civilization of the world. Now, “thanks to the possession of applied science and hence of machine guns and battleships, it has managed to obtain a superficial hold upon the whole globe.” What the world looked like and felt like to the men of the thirteenth century, what vestiges of their civilization still remain to us, and what successive discoveries have altered their world to the one in which we now live is the theme of the book.

A palimpsest, De Quincey termed the human mind; a mosaic, others have termed it. There is hardly a belief of the past, writes the author, that does not

enter, in some form, into the modern world as the object of passionate allegiance. Yet, for all these vestiges, it is

a transformed world. A fundamental difference between the old and the new is the widespread consciousness of evolution—the concept of a world of change, growth, and development. From the welter of conflicting faiths and pathways of salvation there seems to be emerging



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The Morris House on Eighth Street

¹The Making of the Modern Mind. A Survey of the Intellectual Background of the Present Age. By John H. Randall, Jr. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. \$5.

a frank acceptance of the goods of life and an intensification and multiplication of them through scientific knowledge. What beliefs or ideals the future will adopt cannot be predicted. Faith—a trust in something, whatever it may be, outside ourselves—faith and intelligence will determine.

This book has learning, understanding, a closely woven unity of design, and a clear perspective. Then, too, it is easy to read. A Huxleyan lucidity characterizes its diction. To scan any of its passages, and particularly those that deal with the more recondite phases of his subject, is to recognize the work of a writer who has first taken the pains to comprehend what he means to write about and has then taken equal care to explain it in the accepted specie of current terms.

Professor Thorndike leads off with an avowal which to many readers will seem an unhappy blend of the naïve and the grandiose.² "When the World War broke out in 1914," he begins, "I determined to do what little I could to keep civilization alive." Here and there, moreover, are little touches somewhat suggestive of that complex popularly known as "parlor radicalism." The treatment of the world-wide reaction against the French Revolution, with the statement regarding the attitude of Lord Byron (page 507) and of the like reaction against the Bolshevik régime (pages 525–526), is a case in point. It ought not to be necessary to remark that the poet who wrote,

Yet France got drunk with blood to vomit crime,
And fatal have her saturnalia been
To Freedom,

clearly recognized that the chief cause of the reaction was the savage terrorism practiced by the republicans and *not* their assault on privilege. A like terror, one hundred and twenty-five years later, has borne a like effect.

But these are minor matters and detract but little from the sterling excellence of the book. In the first place, it is a marvel of compression. How many ponderous tomes have been gutted for this rich store of material, packed within the compass of 600 pages, it would be idle to guess. The latest researches in the many fields of discovery have been drawn upon both for the life of the ancient world and for the life of to-day. What men have thought and done, how they have lived and governed themselves, what religious and social customs

² A Short History of Civilization. By Lynn Thorndike. F. S. Crofts & Co., New York. \$5.



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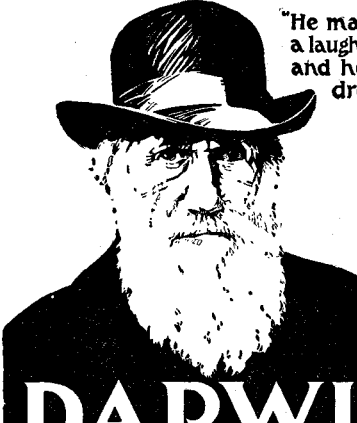
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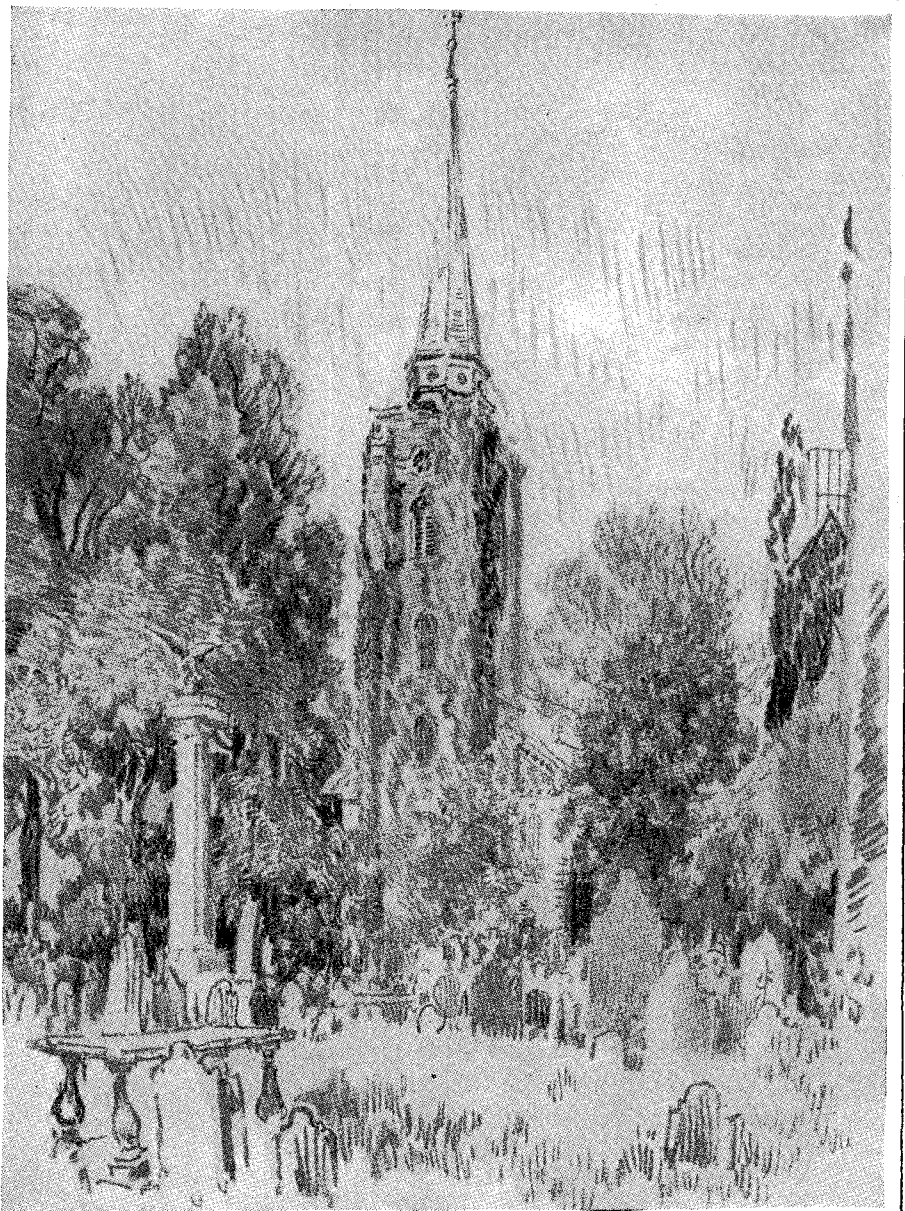
Three New Novels

Reviews by R. D. TOWNSEND

THE fading of romance is rather a favorite theme in Miss Glasgow's novels. In her "Romantic Comedians"¹ we find it approached partly from the satirical and partly from the sorrowful side. The dignified elderly Judge who is so ill-advised as to marry a charming young girl does in a measure win our sympathy, but we never forget

that this is a case of "no fool like an old fool." His sister, who boasts of her four husbands, and enjoys the scandalous aroma that clings to her past, neither amuses nor edifies; she is there to stand for the gross conception of love as hilarity and indulgence. The sweet old maid who has loved the Judge all her life stands for the essentially unembodied romanticism of the old era. The young wife is the modern girl; she is not restrained from following the leading of

¹The Romantic Comedians. By Ellen Glasgow. Doubleday, Page & Co., New York. \$2.50.



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