

observer of human nature and a faithful depicter of social and personal struggles toward life and liberty.

It will be remembered that when Mr. Bromfield's "Possession" appeared he indicated that the story, together with the previously published "The Green Bay Tree" and other novels he had in view, were to be like panels in a screen "all interrelated and each giving a certain phase of the ungainly, swarming, glittering spectacle of American Life." This is the fourth panel. Whether more are to follow we do not know—the plan is of course indefinitely expandable. It may be noted, however, that the connection between the novels is only in the slightest degree structural; one can read the four in any order without the least confusion or hindrance. A very few characters appear more than once, but usually the second or third appearances are of a background type.

What, then, is the general theme? It might possibly be a question of discussion if the publishers had not now given

the clue in the group title, "The Escape"—thus, in "The Green Bay Tree" Lily and Irene Shane rebel against restraint, the one by becoming frankly but elegantly immoral, the other by refuge in the Church and humanitarianism; in "Possession" Ella Tolliver escapes from the social aridity of mill-town life in the development of her musical career; in "Early Autumn" (the Pulitzer Prize book) Olivia Pentland beats against the bars of clammy, family exclusiveness; in "A Good Woman" not only Philip but his wife, Naomi, who wakes from all but incredible narrowness to passion and tragedy, revolt against the bondage of their Emma-imposed lives. Some of these revolvers gain something, some meet full disaster, but all suffer loss of the fullness of what life should have been.

In general it may be said that it is not the interrelation of theme, but the invention, dramatic suspense, and strong character creation, that makes these novels powerful.

Fiction

GERFALCON. By Leslie Barringer. Doubleday, Page & Co., New York. \$2.

A mediæval romance somewhat overlaid with the high-flown talk knights and ladies are supposed to have used in olden days, but well supplied with deeds of chivalry, trials of arms, sieges, an extra-wicked robber baron, and true love rewarded. It may prove a relief to those weary of ultra-modernity.

CONGAREE SKETCHES. By E. C. L. Adams. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, N. C. \$2.

These tales of Negro life and talk are restricted locally only to "heaven, hell, and the Congaree swamps in South Carolina." They have more than a folk-lore and dialect interest; they get at the flavor of the colored man's humor and the way he looks at his own faults, struggles, and ambitions.

THE MOB. By Vicente Blasco Ibañez. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York. \$2.

If the translation were smoother and smacked less of Spanish idiom, the American reader might take more interest than he is likely to do in the adventures of the newspaper hanger-on who sees the sordid side of Madrid life—squalor, poverty, sensuality, petty politics—pass by him in a weird panorama. The story has romance and realism, but it is straggling in construction and will not be classed with the author's best novels.

ERROR KEEP. By Edgar Wallace. Doubleday, Page & Co., New York. \$2.

The arch-criminal in this super-thriller is crazy, but all the more efficient as a rook. A mild but deep Scotland Yard man follows this lunatic's subtle and murderous plots by reasoning out how his insane genius would work, and by a very narrow margin thereby saves the heroine beloved by the detective, but only after a series of exciting dangers in dungeons and caves, and with horrors aplenty.

Aviation

WE. By Charles A. Lindbergh. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York. \$2.50.

The saga of the world-famous airman is wittily told. It covers but five years of

fresh youth that began adventuring in 1922, when he took up flying as an avocation. The story is bird-like in its breeziness and details the care-free life of an aviator, the first requisite of whose composition would appear to be absence of worry. The greater part of the book is devoted to personal experiences previous to the Paris flight, told with simple directness. Besides this the author sets down some sage opinions on aviation; for example: "Trans-Atlantic service is still in the future. Extensive research and careful study will be required before any regular schedule can be maintained. Multimotored boats with stations along the route will eventually make Trans-oceanic air-lines practical but their development must be based on a solid foundation of experience and equipment."

Ambassador Herrick furnishes a foreword for the volume. "I felt without knowing why," he observes, that Lindbergh's arrival "was far more than a fine deed well accomplished, and there glowed within me the prescience of splendor yet to come. Lo! it did come and has gone on spreading its beneficence upon two sister nations which a now conquered ocean joins."

History

A POLITICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF ENGLAND. By Frederick C. Dietz, Associate Professor of History in the University of Illinois. The Macmillan Company, New York. \$4.

Arranged for the use of students, this volume will be found interesting and instructive by the general reader. Professor Dietz has studied English history to good purpose. It is refreshing to get hold of a book that deals with a great nation's advance in such clear and forceful fashion.

THE FAMINE IN SOVIET RUSSIA, 1919-1923. The Operations of the American Relief Administration. By H. H. Fisher. The Macmillan Company, New York. \$5.

This record of American efficiency and charitable effort is a worthy chronicle of a great act of philanthropy. The chief interest in the volume lies in the chapter on the causes of the famine. Primarily, it began with the Soviet prohibition of free

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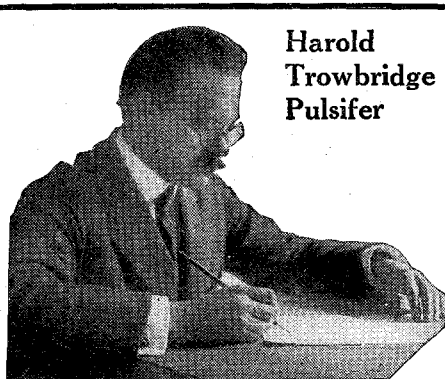
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trade in food and the establishment of what was really military Communism in an attempt to enforce the unenforceable. Out of this it was easy to produce civil strife and banditry. Add to this the breaking down of transport, and we have the terrible results well accounted for.

Journalism

EDITORIAL SILENCE: The Third Era in Journalism. By Dr. Robert T. Morris. The Straiford Company, Boston. \$2.50.

The distinguished New York surgeon who writes this book must have had a lot of fun in freeing his mind about all sorts of things besides the editors. He is pretty correct in his criticism of up-to-date journalism, but expects too much when he suggests the topical treatment of nut raising and the protection of swamp life instead of the sensations of the day. Dr. Morris makes nut raising a specialty on his plantation in Connecticut, so much so that unkind editors may retort by calling him a "nut"—which he is not.

Essays

DRIFTWOOD. By Walter G. Shotwell. Longmans, Green & Co., New York. \$2.50.

These are leisurely biographical or historical sketches, evidently the work of a writer of culture who has had a special interest in certain American people and places such as Logan (the Indian, not the General), Zoar (home of the early Separatists), Secretary Stanton (Mr. Shotwell has written books about Sumner and the Civil War), and "Old Gnadenhutten" (of Moravian memory). A set essay on William Hazlitt seems oddly placed in this company.

LAUGHING TRUTHS. By Carl Spitteler. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York. \$2.50.

There has been hitherto but one translation into English of anything from the pen of Carl Spitteler, poet and essayist, the most distinguished of modern Swiss writers and winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1919. His name is practically unknown in America. The present volume should be welcomed, although frankly, despite its many excellences, we found it a little disappointing. The enticing title, "Laughing Truths," suggests wit, humor, a light and delicate touch, rather than the volume of serious criticism of life, literature, and music which we found ourselves reading, illumined though it often is by flashes of brilliance, and conceived generally in a mood humorously cynical, though neither consistently nor always obviously so. It is solid fare than we had our mouth made up for, and when one is expecting a peach one is less likely to appreciate a pippin. But the pippin, at times, certainly is a pippin; and we cannot commend too heartily the clarity, the uncommon common sense, and the admirable presentation of the author's point of view in the opening essay, which remained our favorite—"Art—Bond and Free." It is a joy to hear a man who was himself so deeply and appreciatively devoted to the arts of literature and music deprecate enforced culture and insist that "the ennobling and educative power of art rests not on knowing but on enjoying," and furthermore that "in normal persons the craving for art has its pauses; it is periodic; an everlasting wolfish hunger for art is in itself a sign of a morbid condition, where the diagnosis indicates pseudo-culture." Dutiful but unenthusiastic members of classes and attendants at lectures may well sit up and take notice.

Biography

CARLYLE AT HIS ZENITH (1848-53). By David Alex Wilson. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York. \$5.

This is the fourth volume of studies by the author covering the career of Thomas

Carlyle, two of which are still to come. It is an engaging essay, Boswellian in its character, but gleaned from the observations of others and spiced with brisk comment. Thus we get rather more of contemporaneity than of Carlyle, but the result is illuminating and entertaining. The chapters are short and episodic.

Even at his zenith Carlyle had begun to show the irritating effects of indigestion. The wonder is that the man kept any friends. He sneered at Ralph Waldo Emerson, while he regarded Herbert Spencer "an immeasurable ass." Spencer, on the other hand, found it "useless to reason with him" and set himself down as not caring for frequent contacts. However, Carlyle could now and then say a good word grudgingly. Bishop Wilberforce ("Soapy Sam") he held to be "a very clever fellow. I do not hate him near as much as I fear I ought to do." Moreover, he loved Leigh Hunt. Wellington was "truly a beautiful old man." Mazzini when first met was thought "the most beautiful creature I have ever seen, but entirely impractical." Tennyson he called "the best man in England to smoke a pipe with," but deprecated his writing poetry or "cobbling his odes," as he put it. Tennyson also had the merit of being "an intelligent listener." Milne's life of Keats he described as "desiccated dead dog." Yet Milnes was a particular friend. Somehow one feels that acquaintance with Carlyle should be confined to his printed work.

Sociology

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES. By Charles A. Ellwood, Clark Wissler, Robert H. Gault, John M. Clark, Charles E. Merriam, Harry E. Barnes and Carl O. Sauer. Edited by Edward Cary Hayes. The J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia. \$3.50.

The recent achievements and the pronounced tendencies in sociology, anthropology, psychology, cultural geography, economics, political science, and history are here summed up by a group of writers each eminent in his own domain. A foreword by the editor affirms the modern realization that "social science is not many but one," and also the modern understanding of the injunction to "see life steadily and see it whole." It also affirms, less happily, that "the state no longer is a Frankenstein," when what is obviously meant is not the hero of Mrs. Shelley's book but the monster he created. Each of the sciences is treated from the standpoint of its interrelation with the others. The book is essentially one for the "average reader." From many studies which only the exceptional individual could possibly find time to read the essence has been extracted and presented in understandable terms. It is a small library in itself, most creditably compacted.

Children's Books

A MERRY-GO-ROUND OF MODERN TALES. By Caroline D. Emerson. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York. \$2.

Our youngest assistant reviewer, going on six, says this is a good book, and we think so too. In the old folk stories things no less than creatures were often personified—kettles, windmills, churns, and such accompaniments of a simpler civilization. Miss Emerson in this attractive book of short stories has successfully employed and personified some of the familiar machinery and implements of our more complex existence, such, for instance, as the Timid Tank, whose reckless driver kept him so sadly worried; the Temperamental Typewriter, which insisted on typing in full the story of why and how that classic "quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog;" the strong Derrick that was jealous of the Elephant until it picked him up;