

The Thousandfold Thrill of Life

A horny-handed and sin-seared skipper, a lawless soldier with a light-o'-love in every port, a cattle keeper on shipboard, an engineer amidst his oily engines, are put before us in Kipling's stories and poems—says the editor of The Warner Library—so that we recognize them as lovable fellow-creatures responsive to the thousandfold thrill of life.

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Fiction

 IN SUCH A NIGHT. By Babette Deutsch. The John Day Company, New York. \$2.
 Any form is permitted a novelist in these days. He can fill a large canvas with the sprawling liberality of Sinclair Lewis, or limit his scene, his characters, and his action with Aristotleian rigidity, after the occasional fashion of Virginia Woolf. "In Such a Night," which tells the events of an evening house-warming, is a new and successful example of the latter method. It is a method fraught with danger of monotony or unrelieved intensity, pitfalls which Miss Deutsch avoids easily, partly by shifting her view-point frequently, partly by creating an atmosphere of somewhat dreadful suspense through the introduction of a situation probably as embarrassing as any hostess was ever called upon to meet. Another notable feat of accomplishment is a chapter which goes completely James Joyce for several pages

MOTHER KNOWS BEST. By Edna Ferber. Doubleday, Page & Co., New York. \$2.50.

Here is a

and still remains intelligible.

novel cerebral, but absorbing.

Miss Ferber wrote excellent short stories long before her novels, "So Big" and "Show Boat," became best-sellers. She still writes short stories now and then. Those collected in this book do not need to be dubbed "novelettes" or "little novels." They are human, humorous, and pointed. "Classified" and "Our Very Best People" could pass unchallenged as O. Henry at his best, and "Every Other Thursday" is a close rival.

RED DAMASK. By Emanie Sachs. Harper & Brothers, New York. \$2.

At first inclined to class this book with the excellent title as superficial, we confess that in the end we found it an interesting study. It traces the various high spots in the life of an attractive girl, born into and bred in a family of conservative German Jews, and cursed with a conscience. Despite evasions, few of us can escape our ultimate braying in the mortar of experience, and her most poignant experiences come late to Abbey Ware, married to a most estimable husband. The steps through which she suffers perpetual discontent and subsequent development are realistic. So is the vivid portrayal of the close corporation of a Jewish household, the continual squabbles with servants, Donna's amusing personality, and Matthew Heron's caustic one. Abbey's problem is common-that of the badly inhibited individual attempting to free himself. We do not feel that Abbey ever will succeed in this noble task. She is a nervous type, whose brain, for want of adequate occupation, turns in on itself; but we acknowledge the author's good work on a sordid situation. At least the latter writes from experience and has not lost her sense of humor.

BROTHER SAUL. By Donn Byrne. The Century Company, New York. \$2.50.

That Donn Byrne, having chosen to write of Biblical times and persons, should fill a rich scene with figures replete with color, feeling, vitality, and touched with poetic imagination, any one familiar with his other work might have guessed. It would have been less easy to foretell that he would be able so convincingly to compel his readers to follow stage by stage, to understand, and to accept as inevitable the slow and difficult change and development in the complex character of Saul of Tarsus, by which the hard and learned Rabbi Saul of the Sanhedrim, the persecutor of Christians, becomes the lofty and gentle old man of the closing pages, loved and lovable, carrying unweariedly the message of the Nazarene. But he accomplishes this with striking success; and there are other notable characterizations in a notable book, nobly conceived: Gamaliel, Barnabas, Stephen, the sweet and shadowy Nossis, Thekla the shining Greek girl, and Uncle Joachim—above all, the flawless portrait of Uncle Joachim.

CRAVEN HOUSE. By Patrick Hamilton. Houghton, Mifflin Company, Boston. \$2.50.

To most Americans boarding-houses are already prehistoric. They may linger in summer resorts and small towns, but only as survivals struggling for existence against the vigorous self-determinism of kitchenettes and cafeterias. But apparently boarding-houses still flourish in London, and it is a boarding-house of the ancient tradition, with its dismal pretentiousness and its odd collocation of human beings brought together like the "happy families" of the zoo, that we find in "Craven House." Miss Hatt, the proprietor of this genteel habitation, is stoutish, talkative, and determinedly merry, with a masterful hand on her two slaveys and the inner grievance of all boarding-house keepers. In her "family" are her two old friends, skinny, smiling Mrs. Spicer and Mr. Spicer of the walrus mustache and golden tooth; curt, watchful Mrs. Nixon and her timid, shrinking little daughter; and the new "permanent," Major Wildman, and his small son. Other figures come within the group during the years from 1911 to 1926, through which Mr. Hamilton weaves a thin thread of romance about the two children and lifts the cover of the caldron to glimpse the incompatibilities, futilities, absurdities, cruelties, and innocencies that simmer within. The tale has a gusto of detail and characterization that leaves an impress, but it is heavy-handed in humor and clumsy in dramatic action.

Biography

THE DIARY OF ELBRIDGE GERRY, JR. Brentano's, New York. \$2.

tano's, New York. \$2.

This story of Elbridge Gerry's journey to Washington in 1813, when his father was Vice-President, during President Madison's Administration, is pleasantly remindful of Josiah Quincy's trip to that city when John Quincy Adams was President, thirteen years later, told in "Figures of the Past." Young Gerry traveled on horseback over atrocious roads for the most part, and young Quincy by the comparatively easy stage-coach. Both give a lively picture of Washington society of their time, Gerry being too enamored of social doings to heed the clouds of impending war overhanging the country.

A curious discrepancy occurs in his account of the trip. Arriving at Hartford, Connecticut, he speaks of passing through Plymouth, Vermont, a foot-note asserting that this Plymouth was "the boyhood home of President Coolidge." The diary goes on to say: "Beyond this town we traveled over part of the Green Mountains of Ver-mont" to the adjoining town of Watertown. As Plymouth is in Vermont and Watertown in Connecticut, and the next day's journey took them to Danbury, Connecticut, we infer that a leaf describing another journey has strayed into this diary, the editor thoughtlessly mistaking the village for the Vermont Plymouth. Elbridge Gerry uses the stilted style of that day, with frequent boyish attempts at fine writing. He says of Mount Pleasant, in the Catskills: To delineate with correctness the features of this is difficult. Nature appears to have formed this spot as the first on the lists of romance, . . . the houses are scattered and fancy in her true robes is displayed in their situations." The party see "elegant rivers" and "handsome islands" and fasten their boats "to the roots of umbrageous trees." But most of his flowers of speech are re-served for the "lovely ladies of his acquaintance." At the end of a wild forest

ride he writes: "I was transported on my alighting, with a view of several female countenances, and soon discovered them to be very handsome." He meets many "romantic ladies" and "beautiful females," and asserts: "I always like to be in the regions of ladies, the atmosphere is so much purer." He describes Dolly Madison as very handsome, of elegant form and dignified deportment, . . . fine complexion, high and delicately colored, . . . dressed in a yellow silk gown rather loose and plain, ... neat bonnet, ... a cravat around her neck, ... spangled cloth shoes;" but, he adds regretfully, "her feet I had not the honor of being permitted to examine, and therefore am unable to describe." No such deprivation exists to-day!

Young Gerry appears to have been a great beau, and remained a beau, presumably, to the end, dying, unmarried, at the age of ninety-two.

THE PRODIGIOUS LOVER. New Aspects in the Life of Richard Wagner. By Louis Barthou. Translated by Henry Irving Brock. Duffield & Co., New York. \$2.50.

M. Barthou (former Premier of France) does not specify exactly what may be novel in his findings on Wagner, nor do his publishers. All are here, the old familiar faces-Minna Planer, Mathilde Wesendonck, Cosima von Bülow, and the perhaps unwillingly complaisant husbands of the latter two, forming as extraordinary a crew as ever surrounded a man of genius. Still, there are odd lots of youthful loves and casual passers-by on the byways of love, of whom M. Barthou informs us. Not all the writer's talent can make his book much more than unedifying, and some passages, mainly quotations from Wagner's own letters, are conducive to actual retching. Unquestionably, some prodigious music emerged from the prodigious loves, but on the whole we prefer to listen to the music and remain comfortably ignorant of its origins.

Science

MARVELS OF MODERN MECHANICS. By Harold T. Wilkins. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York. \$3.

An addition to the rapidly increasing crop of books complimenting the human race on its genius. The title leaves little to be said in outlining the contents. The author not only summarizes modern achievement in laboratory and experi-mental science and in the world of engineering, mechanics, and applied power generally, but also predicts, with admirable restraint for one so sanguine, what we may expect to enjoy in time to come. Knowledge and imagination coupled with the power of deduction may be relied on to anticipate with fair accuracy the developments of the future. With memories of the first moving pictures and the reports coming in from reliable sources, it would seem reasonable to prophesy that our progeny will be able to sit in a Broadway theater and watch the progress of the Olympic Games as they are fought out at Madrid. Mr. Wilkins does not treat us to this peep into the future, but it would not be out of place with the others.

The chapters on the raising of wrecks from the ocean floor and aviation are particularly romantic. In the last ten years it has been obvious to any thinking person that flying has been striding with sevenleague boots towards complete safety and comfort. It is refreshing to learn what has actually been done and how much closer than we had imagined it is to practical

perfection.

THE ROMANCE OF CHEMISTRY. By William Foster, Ph.D., Professor in Chemistry at Princeten University. The Century Company, New York. \$3.

Professor Foster traces his subject from the ancient alchemist's search for the philosopher's stone and the transmutation of metals to the marvelous achievements

attained in modern laboratories. It is indeed a romance—from happenchance discoveries, like that of phosphorus, down to radium and helium. Beyond this is a detailed account of chemical usefulness and application to arts and manufactures, entertainingly told. Sulphur, it is interesting to learn, is a pillar of industry as well as orthodoxy.

History

THE WAR MYTH IN UNITED STATES HISTORY. Dy C. H. Hamlin. The Vanguard Press, New York. 50c.

For those who believe with Benjamin Franklin that there never was a good war or a bad peace, Professor Hamlin furnishes a cogent historical background. Written as a monograph for the Association to Abolish War, he demonstrates the failure of force where common sense would have done so much better. But, alas, common sense is soon relegated to the background when the drums begin to beat! It has been so ever since Jason threw the stone among the earth children in Colchis. This is not meant to belittle a powerfully written and valuable volume. Would that all men-and women-might read it and become wise!

THE PEACEMAKERS OF 1864. By Edward Chase Kirkland. The Macmillan Company, New York. \$2.50.

Perhaps "The Meddlers of 1864" would

have been a more accurate title for Mr. Kirkland's interesting volume, which portrays the perplexities thrown in the path of President Lincoln by politicians and busybodies in the culminating days of the Rebellion. As a cross-section of history it fills a gap and enables the reader to grasp the details of a situation that might well have defeated all the aims for which the great conflict was ultimately fought.

Business

AN OUTLINE OF CAREERS. A Practical Guide to Achievement. Edited by Edward L. Ber-rays. The George H. Doran Company, New York. \$5.

A large volume of essays by thirty-eight men and women who have done well in their respective lines. Written "for the guidance of young people" and stating the "requirements, opportunities, and pitfalls of their own fields of achievement."

Gardening

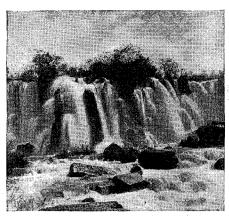
THE BEGINNER'S GARDEN. By Mrs. Francis King. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. \$2.

All Mrs. King's garden books are good, and her latest, "A Beginner's Garden," is likely to be one of the most serviceable by no means to beginners only. There are valuable hints to the more experienced of a practical nature, besides a chapter calling attention to a pleasure which too few gardeners have as yet discovered for themselves: that of what might be termed garden geography. It is interesting even to the mind which simply enjoys facts to know from what country far or near, from what mountain ranges or lush river-bottoms, where strange creatures prowl, the plants so comfortably domesticated in his garden originally came; while to the gardener blessed with imagination such knowledge affords the mind a fascinating run among fields of unguessed variety and charm.

Sociology

FRENCH SOCIETY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. By Louis Ducros. G. P. Put-nam Sons, New York. \$5.

This is an interesting and valuable book -delightful browsing for any one with even a slight acquaintance with eighteenth-century France, a useful accompaniment and illumination for the student, and of special value to libraries in furnishing much varied information, social, historical, and personal. As M. Ducros modestly says, it is an attempt to show French life



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