

to tell the whole truth. The story centers about the figure of Susanna, a young Roman matron falsely accused of murdering her husband, but so many pages are occupied with elaborate details regarding chemical analyses, bribed witnesses, a corrupt judiciary, etc., that the unfortunate girl remains a dim ghost, although she is the *raison d'être* of it all, and the novel therefore suffers some loss of interest. There are many minor characters, sketched in a lively manner, but they come between the reader and the legitimate object of his interest, Susanna, the result being like the "forest" and the "trees." We can't see the accused for the evidence in the famous trial. Such piling up of detail constitutes a serious artistic defect; values are disturbed, and a moving situation goes for naught while chemists and politicians wrangle *ad infinitum*. The epigram regarding the Brothers James might be paraphrased. If Signor Ferrero has in the past written glowing pages of history like fiction, he has in the present instance produced fiction like history. "The Seven Vices" is written in the dramatic style characteristic of the author's historical works; there is penetration, power, wit and imagination, as well as profound knowledge of the background, Rome in the Nineties. If the hand of the conscientious historian is too evident to some readers, others who admire a Zola-like attention to detail will be enthusiastic about a novel which, in its epic scope, reminds one of "The World's Illusion" by Wasserman. Oliviero, a sort of Lohengrin to the persecuted Susanna, is not unlike Christian of the earlier novel. Dissipated like other young men of Roman society, he still is moved by a passion to bring order, truth and justice out of the chaos of vice and political dishonesty which almost submerges him. The author's analysis of the complex social elements in Rome at the end of the last century is all that might be expected from a scholar of Ferrero's distinction. "The Seven Vices" is a monumental work. It has to be taken seriously whether we like it or not. Incidentally, we think the original title, "La Terza Roma," far better than "The Seven Vices" of the translation, since the period of the book is that when Rome is still on the threshold of what promises to be a brilliant era in her incomparable national life, even if it does not equal in glory the ages of the Caesars and the Popes.

MARY SHIRLEY.

## The Week's Reading

*Hunky* by THAMES WILLIAMSON: Coward-McCann. \$2.50. Published this week.

THE AUTHOR of *Hunky* knows that if you would write, today, and be praised, you must not write of crinolines and wit, of heroines with clean lips and clear eyes, or of heroes who swear blood-brotherhood. He knows that if you dress romance in dirty clothes, bob your heroine's hair and morals and set your story in a factory dump, you may be as

## The Most Discussed Books

THIS SELECTION is compiled from the lists of the ten best-selling volumes sent us by wire from the following bookshops each week:

BRENTANO'S, New York; SCRANTOMS, INC., Rochester; KOKNER & WOOD, Cleveland; SCRUGGS, VANDEVOORT & BARNEY, St. Louis; KENDRICK BELLAMY CO., Denver; TEOLIN PILLOT CO., Houston; PAUL ELDER & CO., San Francisco; NORMAN REMINGTON CO., Baltimore; EMERY BIRD THAYER, Kansas City; MILLER'S BOOK STORE, Atlanta. BULLOCK'S, Los Angeles; MARSHALL FIELD & CO., Chicago; STEWART KIDD, Cincinnati; J. K. GILL, Co., Portland, Oregon.

### Fiction

*All Quiet on the Western Front*, by Erich Maria Remarque, translated from the German by A. W. Wheen: Little Brown. A searching and sensitive story of the World War which shows what the common soldier thinks of it, whatever flag he follows. Reviewed June 5.

*Young Mrs. Greeley*, by Booth Tarkington: Doubleday, Doran. A brilliant sketch of a common type, the little fool, stuffed with the cheap and nasty pastry of the tabloids and the movies and suffering from indigestion. Reviewed June 12.

*The Black Camel*, by Earl Derr Biggers: Bobbs Merrill. Charlie Chan solves another terrifying mystery.

*Dodsworth*, by Sinclair Lewis: Harcourt, Brace and Co. This sad and bitter story of American marriage is Lewis' best book.

### Non-Fiction

*Henry the Eighth*, by Francis Hackett: Horace Liveright. A masterly re-creation of a striking and important historical scene. Don't miss it. Reviewed April 10.

*Salt Water Taffy*, by Corey Ford: Putnam. A funny if over-long parody of the "Cradle of the Deep."

*The Mansions of Philosophy*, by Will Durant: Simon and Schuster. Durant is good enough as a popular historian of philosophy, but doesn't amount to much as a philosopher, himself. Reviewed June 19.

*The Art of Thinking*, by Abbé Dimnet: Simon and Schuster. A thoughtful Frenchman writes graciously and wisely of a lost art.

*A Preface to Morals*, by Walter Lippmann: Macmillan. The author analyzes brilliantly the dilemma in which the sensitive intellectual finds himself today and offers a philosophy of life for modern men. Reviewed May 8th.

old-fashioned as you please, at heart, and somebody will rise up and call you a "gross realist" (as a critic recommending *Hunky* to book-club subscribers has called Thames Williamson). So Mr. Williamson has taken an inarticulate immigrant who knows not whence he came nor when nor why; an-

other immigrant who has learned to twirl American ways in his fingers as he twirls the dough for American crullers; and a little "dago" slut; and has told a story of goodness and truth as old as the hills, and as enduring. The *Hunky* is as dumb and patient and strong as an ox. He works in a bakery and will work there for nothing if need be so that he has things to do and no decisions to make. He is the transplanted peasant, complete. Serene he folds his hands and waits; and his own comes to him—because this is a romance. Worshipper of Bread, his friend and his girl, his soul stirs with the need of speech. And at last speech comes, halting but satisfactory, as, exalted by a fine job and the prospect of fathering another man's child, he clasps his friend's hand and hears the bells ring for his wedding. A compact scene, characters few but solid, excellent dialogue, hearty humor, a touching story and an unpretentious style; these are the qualities of a book which holds the interest by its perfect naturalness and simplicity. Not realism as we usually see it in novels: but realism, nevertheless, because there are hunkies in every town, stupid beyond belief and decent and true and tender; there are minxes in every factory and sweat-shop and sewing circle; and who shall say that there are not loyal friends in every sunshine bakery?

*Joan Kennedy* by HENRY CHANNON: Dutton. \$2.50. Published last week.

JOAN KENNEDY's story is a distressing, but scarcely a common one. An English girl whose youthful romance has been tragically closed by the war, she succumbs indifferently to the persistent suit of an American aviator whom she has nursed in France. After a baby and a few pleasant years in London, the young Kennedys go to America; on a visit, Joan is told, but actually to stay. The life of the English "county" girl in El Dorado, the city on the lake, is a woeful series of disillusionments and a mounting homesickness. Hope springs a few times to her breast, but facts always beat it down. Joan doesn't have enough children to keep her busy—her own fault that—and her longing for the sweet familiar ways of home grows until her days became a long melancholy remembering of youth. The book has a quality of needless wretchedness about it, but it is dramatic and psychologically

(Please Turn to Page 433)

# Health: Public and Private

## As Discussed in Recent Books

A FEW DAYS AGO the National Tuberculosis Association celebrated in Atlantic City, where it was organized in 1904, its twenty-fifth anniversary. This is a reminder, if any were needed, of the rapid developments which have taken place in the twentieth century in what we awkwardly call preventive medicine or public-health work, and also—largely a consequence—in our attitude toward health and in the average *per capita* amount of health in circulation.

Since the beginning of the anti-tuberculosis movement many other combinations of doctors, economists, social workers, business men, and other "laymen" have been formed on the same general plan. In the same period the official guardians of our health have greatly enlarged their functions and expanded their services, until the large cities of the country are spending something like six times as much for health and sanitation as they did at the opening of the century. The science of medicine has made great advances. The quality of medical education has been immensely improved, partly by eliminating many low-grade schools, and the general level of ability among practising physicians has been correspondingly raised. Hospitals have increased until they could accommodate three-fourths of the persons estimated to be sick enough, on any given day, to need hospital care—that is, they could if the beds and the sick people could be properly matched up. The number of graduate nurses, as reported by the census, increased from 11,804 in 1900 to 149,128 in 1920, when they outnumbered the physicians, and is probably over 300,000 by this time. And the morticians are complaining of lack of work.

Public-health work has already entered the universities as the subject of "cultural" undergraduate courses, presenting facts which "should be an essential part of the equipment of every college man or woman," and these courses have even reached the stage of producing text-books. A recent one—packed with facts and pictures—is "Community Hygiene" (Macmillan), by Dean Franklin Smiley, M.D., and Adrian Gordon Gould, M.D., of the department of hygiene in Cornell University.

Another evidence—likewise a cause—of advance in this field is the number of books written by doctors on their own subjects avowedly, and very success-

fully, for the general public. Dr. William H. Park, for example, director of the bureau of laboratories of the New York City department of health, and his colleague, Dr. Anna W. Williams, in "Who's Who Among the Microbes" (Century) give us intimate glimpses of the private life of these "invisible, omnipresent enemies and friends," show us their portraits, and erect their hypothetical family tree. And this book "grew out of a series of radio talks."

"A Short History of Medicine" (Oxford University Press), by Charles Singer, M.A., M.D., Litt.D., Oxford, and lecturer in the University of London, begins with the explanation that "The position that Medical Science has now assumed in the social polity demands that all educated men and women should have some knowledge of the subject." A rich store of learning enables Dr. Singer to present a well proportioned, comprehensive account, in sequence, of the discoveries through the ages which have brought medicine to its present stage. His clear and simple text is supplemented by 142 illustrations of unusual value, such as Galen's physiological system, Leonardo da Vinci's drawing of a dissection of the heart, and a beautifully posed and "remarkably accurate" skeleton from the classic work of Vesalius, published in 1543. As for the future, Dr. Singer's word to "those who would promote the health of mankind" is that they "would do well if they sought to encourage not so much the medical sciences as Science as a whole, or rather Learning as a whole, for Science is a way of life which may penetrate into all departments of Learning, and is something far greater than those discrete accumulations of knowledge that we call the sciences."

Less comprehensive, bulkier, ten ounces heavier on the scale, and more "popular" is "Devil, Drugs, and Doctors" (Harper), by Howard W. Haggard, M.D., associate professor of applied physiology in Yale University. This is not a consecutive chronological history, but separate accounts of progress in certain overlapping fields. Much curious information about practices and beliefs of past ages (and of today) is brought together, and the suffering for which ignorance and superstition have been (and are still) responsible is made very vivid. This book too is enriched by many illustrations from original sources—147 in fact—very few of which dupli-

cate those used by Dr. Singer. There are fewer reproductions of scientific landmarks and more of pictures by artists: such as a caricature of 1800 of a midwife hurrying to a case; Daumier's etching of a patient in bed with a corpse—a common occurrence in hospitals two or three centuries ago; contemporary posters of the burial of plague victims in London in 1665 and 1666; an obstetrical chair in use, from a sixteenth-century woodcut; and from the works of a Dutch physician, dated 1681, a doctor performing his manipulations on a parturient woman with a sheet tied securely around his neck and under the patient's arms, out of regard for her modesty.

The general condition of medicine in the United States from 1775 to 1928 forms the background of "A History of the Medical Department of the United States Army" (Houghton Mifflin), by Colonel P. M. Ashburn, librarian of the army medical library. Colonel Ashburn's story, in the words of Surgeon General Ireland, is "true, wholly free from exaggeration, documented and accurate, but not long drawn out or hard to read." For the general reader it is a reminder that modern medicine and sanitation are indeed of very recent development, and that the army has made notable contributions to that development.

A book written primarily for persons engaged in, or responsible for, one branch of nursing, but also of general interest, is "The Nurse in Public Health" (Harper), by Mary Beard, assistant director of the Division of Medical Education of the Rockefeller Foundation. Miss Beard discusses "some current problems of public-health nursing administration" (the jacket says "all") in the light of twenty-five years' experience, and describes certain activities of which she has personal knowledge in foreign countries.

As a corrective to undue complacency it is salutary, especially for us Americans, to be reminded by Miss Beard and Dr. Haggard of our disgraceful mortality among women at childbirth, as compared with that of England, Denmark, Sweden, and some other European countries; by Dr. Singer that there are still "whole departments" of medical knowledge in which "no progress has been made;" and to read, in "Health Work in Soviet Russia" by Anna J. Haines (Vanguard Press) of the ultra-modern and comprehensive system which has been set up in a country where the conditions for most of the population a dozen years ago were almost medieval.

EDWARD T. DEVINE.