

An extremely interesting book, a book very well worth reading, "Wolf Solent" is yet not a moving one. The characters are, with the exception of Wolf's mother and one or two minor characters which do not take solid shape, vicious or morbid to the point of tedious sameness. Progressive madness marks them all. The seething confusion of characters and situations never resolves itself. One closes the book with a sense of having been left suspended in troubled space.

Mr. Powys writes with beautiful simplicity. A mystic love of nature pervades his book and evokes exquisite sensations of a countryside that never was and yet that is all countrysides. His clairvoyant sensitivity fills his work with richly quotable and memorable figures of imagery.

Robbers and Soldiers. By ALBERT EHRENSTEIN. Translated from the German by GEOFFREY DUNLOP: Knopf. \$2.50. Published May 17.

The Bandits. By PANAIT ISTRATI. Translated from the French by WILLIAM DRAKE: Knopf. \$2.50. Published May 17.

THE FIRST PARAGRAPH of "Robbers and Soldiers" is irresistible. It tells of Jao, the scholar, and his wife, Fang. It is poetic justice that the son of Fang should be the most charming rogue in Chinese fiction. The basis of this story is the Thirteenth Century thriller, "The Island in the River," and being a favorite of the people it has appeared in many forms and has been read by millions. Here it is told with such artless erudition that it promises the fulfillment of the sinologist's dream, retranslation as the final form of the Chinese classic.

There are no mandarins, no dainty princesses, nothing of the conventional Chinese story. The 140 episodes are reduced to twelve magnificent adventures among the peasants. It reaches from the poisoned wine of disguised date merchants to cannibals, from vegetarians to magicians, and Wu Sung is the hero of it all.

Quite unlike this is "The Bandits," a story of Rumanian Robin Hoods of a century ago, told by Panait Istrati. Around a camp fire in the mountains this band of Haidoucs are at ease, each telling the story of how he happened to join the group. It is hard to believe that William Drake entered into the spirit of the story when he translated

this picaresque novel, though we have not examined the French edition.

That Capri Air. By EDWIN CERIO: Harper. \$3.50.

Paper Houses. By WILLIAM PLOMER: Coward-McCann.

People and Places. By DOUGLAS GOLDRING: Houghton, Mifflin. \$3. All published this week.

ON THE GAY jacket of "That Capri Air," Ernest Boyd says, with a questioning inflection, "Another of the Protean manifestations of Norman Doug-

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; SCRANTONS, INC., Rochester; KORNER & WOOD, Cleveland; SCRUGGS, VANDEVOORT & BARNBY, St. Louis; KENDRICK BELLAMY CO., Denver; TEOLIN PILOT 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

Dodsworth, by Sinclair Lewis: Harcourt, Brace. This sad and bitter story of American marriage is Lewis's best book, and must not be missed. Reviewed March 20.

Dark Hester, by Anne Douglas Sedgwick: Houghton, Mifflin. This conflict between a possessive mother and a modern daughter-in-law is described with subtle penetration in lovely prose. Reviewed March 27.

Dark Star, by Lorna Moon: Bobbs-Merrill. This melodramatic story of illegitimacy is distinguished by deft handling and fine characterization. Reviewed March 27.

The Bishop Murder Case, by S. S. Van Dine: Scribner. Philo, mathematics, chess, nursery rhymes, and lots of murders in this. Reviewed February 27.

Mamba's Daughters, by DuBose Heyward: Doubleday, Doran. A richly melodramatic story of Charleston negroes and their white-folks. Reviewed February 6th.

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.

The Cradle of the Deep, by Joan Lowell: Simon and Schuster. These salty and "fishy" adventures are making money for the author and trouble for the sponsors. Reviewed March 13.

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

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

Swords and Roses, by Joseph Hergesheimer: Knopf. Pearly prose tears shed by a romantic over a cause great enough to command more stalwart celebration. Reviewed April 10.

las?" The translators of these short, spicy, and ironic papers say no. And among them are, besides Douglas, Louis Golding and Francis Brett Young, which guarantees the grace, the pungency and the charm of the translation. Cerio is said to be the king-pin of Capri, that "sunny place for shady people." He knows something funny and not al-

ways too flattering about every one who lives there, and much about the highly colored past of the lovely island. The book is a diverting introduction to Capri society, but should not be used as a Baedeker to the Blue Grotto.

Nor will William Plomer's book do for a guide to Japan. Here is no cherry-blossom land but very modern country where the sound of the radio is wafted upon the erstwhile perfumed air, and kimonoed ladies hop on and off of trolley cars. Much of the material of these sketches is sensational in a thoroughly journalistic manner. But the style is not journalistic except in its swift fluency. The author seems to understand the people of whom he writes and he has a distinct talent for story-telling.

Douglas Goldring is a familiar and delightful writer of travel essays. In this book he has gone as far afield as the Balearic Islands and Montenegro and as near home—ours, not his—as the United States. He writes with sophistication and ease, has an eye for the bizarre, the unique and the absurd, and a nice sense of humor which enlivens his observations.

Loose Ladies. By VINA DELMAR: Harcourt, Brace. \$2.50. Published May 16.

VINA DELMAR doesn't know that a short story can be a work of art. Her idea of the short story is something in prose running anywhere from one to ten thousand words, peppered with "Hot mamma" dialogue of the Bronx variety and interlarded with several layers of tawdry humor. The result is that of a salad all condiment. Unfortunately, or fortunately, we are not all garlic eaters.

If it is at all possible to classify Vña Delmar's "art!" she must be considered as a rather successful amateur photographer. Our complaint, of course, is not with the people she photographs,—for a miscellany of demi-mondaines, gum-chewing salesgirls, crap-shooting husbands, or maudlin taxicab drivers are as amenable to the short story as the manufacturer of baby diapers,—but because she makes no intelligent effort to sift the material at hand, no effort toward selectivity. She merely itemizes the sensual prodigalities of male and female Jukes in an English that insults the ear, the eye, the nose, and the dictionary. E. M. Benson.

The Bright Thread. By CORNELIA GEER LEBOUTILLIER: Doubleday, Doran. \$2.50.

BELIEVING most profoundly that a literature which does not represent all the elements in a complex society is neither so typical nor so rich as it might be, we welcome this novel by one who would have been once courteously but now is likely to be scornfully described as a New York gentlewoman.

So here is a story which is simple; the story of a boy of fiery and catholic blood adopted by a conservative—oh, weary word—New York family. He is raised in the company of his adopted cousins and under the influence, after the death of his adored foster-mother, of their clergyman father. He carries his hot heart and his idealism into college, through war time and into the turmoil of modern youth. And after learning that he who would fight God's battles must first discipline his own soul, reaches a conclusion in regard to life which, if "old-fashioned," is still noble and infinitely satisfying. With this, there is a charming love story. Mrs. LeBoutillier is a direct, interesting story-teller, not an especially gifted writer as to style. She inclines too much to stereotyped phraseology. But sincerity shines through her pages and she understands her own people thoroughly. They are Americans too, you know.

Characters and Events.

By JOHN DEWEY:
Holt. Published this week. Will be reviewed later by GORHAM B. MUNSON.

Creative Understanding.

By COUNT HERMANN KEYSERLING: Harper. Published this week. Will be reviewed next week by E. M. BENSON.

To Suit Every Taste

Received too late for detailed review

SYMPOSIUMS are popular just now. They offer within readable compass varied opinions on various phases of a subject. An interesting and provocative one is "Christian and Jew." (Edited by Isaac Landman: Horace Liveright. \$3.) It numbers many distinguished contributors, both Christian and Jew, and is dedicated to the admirable cause of better understanding between the two types which dominate this country. Personally we believe that as long as the

great leaders of Jewish thought refuse to accept the simple explanation of inherited racial antagonism as the basis of anti-Jewish feeling and insist on considering as an intellectual prejudice what is an atavistic one we shall not get far, on that side. And that as long as Gentiles fail to realize that an equally strong, equally valid, equally instinctive prejudice against them exists among Jews, we shall not get far on the other side. It is possible, it even begins at times to seem likely, that on both sides instinct is being gradually controlled by acts of reason. But decades will not suffice to tear down what tens of centuries have built. This book deserves wide reading.

Another symposium is on the subject of education. ("The Education of the Modern Girl." Various contributors, with an introduction by Dr. Neilson of Smith College: Houghton, Mifflin. \$3.00.) This is a collection of papers by the headmistresses of eight private schools for girls. The papers deal with such subjects as Home Influences, Academic Influence, College or Not, Athletic Influence, School and Religion, and so forth, and vary in the attitude expressed from the rigidly objective to the sentimental, much as headmistresses, themselves, vary. Not all the ladies

their use and all are interesting to laymen. There is a new complete and detailed history of English comedy which is useful and delightful. ("English Comedy." By Ashley Thorndike: Macmillan. \$4.50.) All the great schools of drama are examined and the finest examples of each, analyzed. Disputatious minor problems of criticism are avoided, and the author adds to his fine scholarship, which will make his book valuable to students, the gift for writing readably which will make it interesting to others. The bibliographical notes and the index are excellent.

The study of modern literature is represented by "The Cycle of Modern Poetry." (A. R. Elliott: Princeton University Press. \$2.50.) This is as interesting a piece of literary criticism as we have read in a long time. It is an investigation of the dilemma into which the author finds that poetry has fallen, the influence which brought it there, and the new directions toward which poetry is groping. It is especially significant as reflecting the turn toward classicism which is beginning to be apparent in much writing. The author's own style is strikingly typical, too, of the tendency to complicated phraseology and rhetorical figures seen in the work of so many of today's neo-classical writers.

"American Literature" (Ernest E. Leisy: Crowell. \$2.50.) is an attempt at a new evaluation of American literature. Authors are grouped by influences and movements rather than chronologically. While competent, the book can scarcely be considered significant. The appendix gives a long supplementary list of writers not discussed in the book, and a bibliography.

"Chief Modern Poets of England and America"

(Selected and edited by Gerald D. Sanders and John H. Nelson: Macmillan. \$2.25.) is a good conventional anthology which seeks not to present many poets, but to present each one fairly. There is a bibliography, and biographical notices of all the poets represented.

Another good anthology is "From Confucius to Mencken." (Edited by F. H. Pritchard: Harper. \$2.00.) In its 1017 pages of examples drawn from



Illustration by Kurt Wiese from "Hindu Fables for Little Children," by Dhan Gopal Mukerji (Dutton)

write as well as they no doubt teach, or think as clearly as we parents would like to have them teach our daughters to think. But some do both. Parents will find the book interesting. But to their attention, as to that of all the contributors to this volume, we commend Professor Whitehead's recently published book on the "Aims of Education."

Teachers will find many useful books among those recently published, although none is specifically designed for