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By Charles P. Howland

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Week's Reading

(Continued from Page 472)

they meet. While you do not wish to ask for needless explanations, such a hiatus in plausibility mars the tale. In *Westward Passage* the author achieves, perhaps less well than in *Years of Grace*, a natural atmosphere drawn from clear observation of what people do and say. The interpretation of how they feel, however, lying just behind her words, lacks that inevitable accent without which the rhythm of human lives seems somehow to have little purport.

VIRGILIA PETERSON ROSS.

Goose Steps to Peace
By Jonathan Mitchell
Little, Brown, \$2.50

"... During these last twelve years, people have asked for peace and have been given a treaty, with seals and ribbon." The people who have asked that wars shall end have, Jonathan Mitchell believes, been "repeatedly deceived." His story of the twelve years since Versailles, *Goose Steps to Peace*, is the story of diplomats who falsified the record, who were timid, who failed. Thus war is still possible, even probable. The pretty treaties, with their seals and ribbons, have accomplished very little.

A book such as this was badly needed and Mr. Mitchell has done the job admirably. He has a peculiar gift for reducing involved, complex and weighty subjects into clear, concise exposition. His experience as a journalist abroad as well as in the United States enabled him to go behind official documents to the actual occurrences at Washington, Locarno and London. "What really happened behind the scenes, Mr. MacDonald?" "What demands did you make at that secret session, M. Briand?" These are the questions he seems to be asking and in many instances he has found the answers. Mr. Mitchell was too excellent a newspaper man to be unaware that the truth is often obscured by propaganda. He has, himself, interviewed enough statesmen to know that newspapers are used to hide the facts.

Mr. Mitchell is not very complimentary in judging the accomplishments of those who have tried to end war: "... The best energies of civilization have gone into the search for peace," he writes, "and there is no peace." His verdict is the result of careful examination of the Washington Conference in 1920, the conference at Locarno and the more recent sessions at London at which naval armaments were to have been limited and which ended in failure. Disaster came because the diplomats sought victories over other diplomats and forgot the real purpose of their gathering—the insurance of peace.

Mr. Mitchell believes that peace is possible and he offers a program. But this is less important than the fact of a brief, well-written analysis of the events of the last twelve years. *Goose Steps to Peace* is a primer for the intelligent man or woman who has long since become lost in the thousands of columns of newspaper despatches and editorials on the conferences of the years since the World War. It is extremely readable without being superficial.

HENRY F. PRINGLE.

Sons of Cain
By Wilfred Saint-Mandé
Coward-McCann, \$2.50

When England entered the World War Wilfred Saint-

Mandé was barely eighteen. In a burst of whim and vanity he decided to join the army. "On the 10th of August," he tells us, "just after tea, I was upstairs lying in the bath, idly throwing water over my chest, which was covered with soap. I was fit and looked at my body with some vanity, for I was tall, perfectly proportioned, muscular and handsome into the bargain.... As I lay in the bath, like a flash the determination came upon me to enlist at once by hook or by crook."

And so Wilfred marched off to war. He was young, strong, handsome and a prig when he joined his company; he was crippled, disfigured and older by a generation when he left at the end of four years—but still a prig. "It is not given to all to play for their school at cricket and Rugby, while preparing for and securing a modern language scholarship at Oxford," is the naïve beginning of his narrative; nor to have a vague, romantic French-emigré ancestor; a prosperous father in the wine business in London; an irresistible attraction for women; and a penchant for pompous philosophizing—of all of which Wilfred is equally proud. The men met him with the cry, "Gor'blimy, lads, 'ere's a bloody Algie," but they soon learned that he could fight, drink and whore with the best of them. They forgave him his conceit for the sake of these qualities and of his youth; and they soon made him one of themselves in that easy immorality, coarse vulgarity and hardy insensibility which characterize the lower depths of English society.

Sons of Cain is the perfect chronicle of such a personality. War, women and wine, women, wine and war are its ever-recurring and unvaried themes. In all its awful intimate detail the suffering and death of the millions of soldiers are graphically depicted. Mass action and hand-to-hand fighting, petty persecution by ignorant martinets and terrible tortures inflicted by callous circumstances, bursting shrapnel and biting lice, rotting corpses and blooming orchards appear be-

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fore us in quick succession, but it is the same reel going round and round.

The book grows tiresome and in its very monotony it makes its point, which Mr. Saint-Mandé repeats in almost the same words more than a dozen times: "I wonder if people will ever realize that there is nothing glorious in war, nothing chivalrous, nothing admirable. It is madness, it is murder, the frenzied slaughter of man by man, the destruction of our noblest and best, the turning of decent men into diabolical murderers and foul-mouthed ruffians. If mothers and sisters all over Europe realized how their sons and brothers are debased morally and spiritually, how all that is noble is destroyed by the blood-lust they would work for peace, I am convinced. But they have been taught that war is glorious, and that myth will be hard to kill. . . . The papers spoke of soldiers, heroic, dashing contemptuous of death; we were all modeled on d'Artagnan. But the tragic fact was that we were civilians in uniforms, of whom not ten per cent had enlisted from patriotic motives. In considering the men around me I saw that most were in no way heroic. They longed for their homes and cursed the war with startling vigor. They cursed all who gave them orders, including the brass hats who came at rare intervals and found fault with everything. They were laborers, clerks, mechanics and humble artisans, who realized that the enemy belonged to the same social classes as themselves and that they were all dupes of those who remained far in the rear, and ordered attacks in order to fill up a communiqué. The dead in front of our parapet stank like blazes, for it was too risky a job to bury them, and when the breeze blew in our direction it made many a man vomit. . . ."

Thus jumbling comment and incident the author produces a bad but interesting book in a good but hopeless cause.

JOHAN J. SMERTENKO.

Without My Cloak
By Kate O'Brien
Doubleday, Doran, \$2.50

A well-buttressed family, anchored to life by relatives and

possessions, presents, above all, solidarity. Something in its bulk alone defies all questioning. Thus this story of the Considines, Irish, Catholic and bourgeois, blossoming in Victorian pride and prejudice, takes root in your mind as an actuality. With unwavering faith in their existence, you follow the children and grandchildren of Honest John Considine through their foibles and their passions. The light of the tale falls upon Denis, the future heir to the business, but drama also spreads along the family ramifications, now touching a lovelorn aunt and now a too lustful cousin, now a disturbed

and pious uncle and now some wispy younger child. Denis, too beautiful and too well loved, does the churning up of the others. He provides the rebellion. Struggling against gratitude, affection and obligations, Denis comes a cropper in his first love and fails his father at his official début in the office. His battle is for an illusion, the dream of personal freedom. The members of his family link around him a chain of tradition against which he hurls himself in vain. Reaching out across the stratum of successful tradespeople in a small Irish town of the nineteenth century, Miss O'Brien seizes and impales a whole era, a whole attitude and a whole racial stamp. You feel, at the end of her book, that she has nourished you with a particularly large, particularly juicy slab from life's well laden feast.

VIRGILIA PETERSON ROSS.

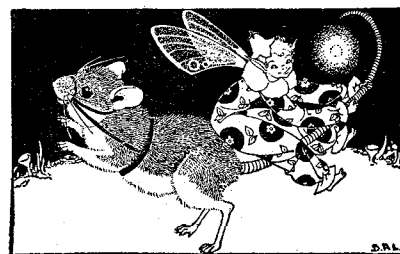
Loving relatives have a way of vaguely putting down "books" opposite the names of the children in the family when making out their Christmas lists. But having made that important decision, they come to an even worse problem when confronted by the bewildering array of juvenile publications. In order to assist OUTLOOK readers in making a choice, May Lamberton Becker, literary editor of *St. Nicholas* and book editor of *The Scholastic*, has prepared the following list of some of the best books for children published during the last year.

AGE 3 to 6 YEARS

The Second Picture Book, Mary Steichen Martin. Harcourt Brace, \$2.
The Christ Child, Maud and Miska Petersham. Doubleday Doran, \$2.
Snippy and Snappy, Wanda Gag. Coward McCann, \$1.50.
The Meddlesome Mouse, Vera Neville, Macmillan, \$2.50.
Peter's Voyage, Elsa Beskow. Knopf, \$2.
The Hole in the Wall, Rene d'Harnoncourt. Knopf, \$2.
Little Pear, Eleanor F. Lattimore. Harcourt Brace, \$2.
The Bright Book of Lights, Helen Minnich. Stokes, \$1.25.
The Little Princess in the Wood, Helen Dean Fish. Pictures by Sibylle von Olfers. Stokes, \$1.50.
Tooky, Elmer and Berta Hader. Longmans Green, \$1.25.
Crocodile, K. Chukovsky. Lippincott, \$1.50.

AGE 6 to 9 YEARS

The Golden Flock, Charlotte Lederer. Farrar & Rinehart, \$1.50.
The Goat Who Wouldn't Be Good, Jan and Zhenya Gay. Morrow, \$1.75.
The Spindle Imp, Alida Malkus. Harcourt Brace, \$2.
The Diamond Princess, Rie Cramer. Warne, \$2.50.
A Day in a Child's Life, Kate Greenaway. Warne, \$2.
The Sing-Song Book, Herbert and Johannes Grueger. Lippincott, \$2.
Mrs. Tickler's Caravan, Cecil Alden. Scribner, \$2.
The Coming of the Dragon Ships, Florence and Howard Everson. Dutton, \$2.
Robbers in the Garden, Marion Bullard. Dutton, \$2.
When Abigail Was Seven, Eliza Orne White. Houghton Mifflin, \$1.75.
Picture Book of Animals, Isabel Ely Lord. Macmillan, \$2.50.
Muskox, Marie A. Peary. Morrow, \$2.
Mostly Mary, Gwynedd Rae. Morrow, \$1.
Bambi, Felix Salten, Simon & Schuster, \$2.50.
Amnon: Lad of Palestine, Marian King. Houghton Mifflin, \$1.75.



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By Dorothy Lathrop

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THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

By Gertrude Hartman

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CALICO BUSH

By Rachel Field

A story of Maine, the Sargent family and of a gallant French heroine, Marie Ledoux, a bound-out girl. A charming book for older girls by the author of "Hitty: Her First Hundred Years," Newbery Medal for 1929. \$2.50

CHING-LI AND THE DRAGONS

By Alice W. Howard Ill. by Lynd Ward

A fairy tale from China. Ching-Li rescues a sacred dragon after many strange adventures. Lovely two-color pictures by a favorite artist. \$3.00

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