

accomplishment worthy of praise. It is the result, I think, of, on the one hand, a belief that character is often quite simple and things are often just what they seem, and, on the other, great respect for the art of writing.

Edith Olivier's *Dwarf's Blood* is a fairy story, and has two of the basic qualities of all fairy stories. It points a moral—or, if you prefer, it is an allegorical presentation of an eternal truth; and it can be read over and over again without any lessening of interest. It has other fairy tale qualities. It is poetic and fanciful; it couldn't have happened; and the happy ending leaves loose ends. The story has to do with a British peer whose mother was a dwarf, and his beautiful wife, and their son, who was a dwarf, too; and with how the man, in spite of his great stature and grace, carried within him the curse of dwarf's blood to the embittering of his life and his wife's; and of how, after years, the dwarf son, himself, exorcised his father's demon. It does not tell how the son, scarcely four feet high and a genius, faced his own life after he realized just what it was to be. The fairy story does not tell us what the good dwarfs do after they have seen their Snow-White safe with her prince, at last. *Dwarf's Blood* is a delicious story, vivid, witty and tender. It is no more like De la Mare's *Memoirs of a Midget*, to which the jacket description suggests that it be compared, than A is like B. One novel is an intense and eerie tragedy, with an inhuman and frightening beauty about it; the other is a fairy comedy, bittersweet, gossamer-light. *Dwarf's Blood* is being sent out to its subscribers by the Literary Guild. While it has not the sharp wit of *The Triumphant Footman*, it is, I think, the best book that Edith Olivier has written, so far. If you do not know her exquisite work we beg you to meet it at once.

*The Garden* is a chronicle of Yesterday; so it is funny and sad, and every one is dead when the last page turns. It is the record of visits made by a small boy, thirty years ago, to a Dublin seacoast where his grandparents live. It is rich in lively episodes, described with spirit, but its chief charm lies in its dialogue and characters. There is a long list of fine types, presented with sympathy and humor, grandparents, gardeners, uncles, cooks and a monkey, all of which would have caught the eye of an Irish Dickens. But he would have put them through the intricacies of a melodramatic plot, whereas Mr. Strong just sets them down and lets them be. You can cry over this book (I should not like to know any one who could not cry over Paddy-monkey's end), but you

can also laugh, and not silently, either. It would be a grand book to read aloud. Mr. Strong's style is lyric. In his previous books I have found it a little soft, but here it is crisp as a fresh cookie. He has sharpened his outlines, packed his foundation firm before laying on his surface, and (what every one who writes novels of reminiscence tries to do but few succeed in doing) got the gusto of life into his book.

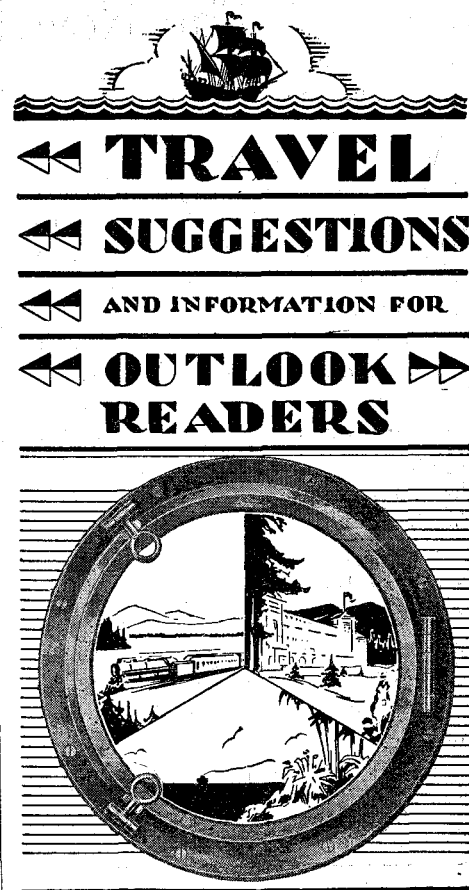
Each of these novelists has done what he set out to do. When all novelists can do that, whether they be leaders of new schools, Nobel prize winners, or contributors to *The Ladies' Home Journal*, we shall have better novels, and not nearly so many.

FRANCES LAMONT ROBBINS.

### The Week's Reading

THE question has often been asked: Who won the World War? Captain Herbert O. Yardley answers it in his captivating volume entitled *The American Black Chamber* (Bobbs-Merrill \$3.50): It was won by that branch of the Military Intelligence Service which Mr. Yardley organized and whose business it was to break the codes of foreign powers. It is admittedly a story of uncommon fascination, and since our government does not bestow the D. S. M. on its servants without studied reason there is no cause to feel that Mr. Yardley has spun his yarn with excess zeal. It might as well be said, however, that there is in the book a tinge of the disgruntled employee; for when Secretary Stimson decided, only the other day, that the messages of foreign countries should be held inviolate, and that the State Department would no longer support the Black Chamber, there was nothing for Mr. Yardley to do but call in his assistants, inform them that unemployment was due a few more recruits, lock the door of his hidden lair in New York City, go to Washington, hand in his final report—and then write this book.

It is an astounding series of incidents he relates, incidents that took place during the sixteen years when he moved up from an humble telegraph operator to the chief of what he is willing to call the most efficient secret service bureau this country ever knew and, now that Secretary Stimson has killed cryptography, ever will know. If what he says is true, Mr. Stimson dismissed probably the most valuable man in the government's employ; for he tells us that when Pershing cabled home about some "surprise" attack that this was simply words to keep the home fires burning; for due to our sixteenth-century method of send-



### MOUNT RAINIER, WASHINGTON

#### National Park

The second highest mountain of the United States, Mount Rainier raises its snow-crowned head from the midst of its five glaciers, like the glittering center of a frosty star. ¶ Only one of these five glacier rays is a National Park at present . . . Paradise Valley . . . but eventually a motor road now under construction will connect all five, and the park will be greatly expanded. ¶ Below the snow line in Paradise Valley are found flowers in the greatest profusion and variety, great mountain meadows of them spread out so thick as to be truly a carpet for those on their way to and from snow sports on the glacier. ¶ Reached by bus from either Seattle or Tacoma Mount Rainier is a splendidly accessible park for Western sightseers. ¶ For literature on this or any National Park, or for holiday suggestions of any kind, write Mrs. Kirkland, Director.

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The list of ten best-selling books printed on Page 280 is compiled from reports sent to the Outlook each week by wire from the following representative bookshops:

BRENTANO'S, New York; SCRANTONS, INC., Rochester; KORNER & WOOD, Cleveland; SCRUGGS, VANDERVOORT & 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; STEWART KIDD, Cincinnati; J. K. GILL CO., Portland, Oregon; JOHN WANAMAKER, Philadelphia; THE OLD CORNER BOOK STORE INC., Boston, Massachusetts.

ing encoded matter the Germans always knew precisely where the American troops were and where they were planning to go. He claims too that he has a plan by which we could in the future have a system that no expert cryptographer could ever decode.

The book is a combination of crossword-puzzle reading, immensely exciting stories, and personalities. Captain Yardley cannot speak in too high terms of Van Deman and Marlborough Churchill, the men who engaged him, while Lansing, he contends, would have been able to change the course of world events had he not been "tied to a tyrant schoolmaster" at home and represented in London by an "Anglophile." It is such remarks as these that make one a bit dubious about the book, but as a matter of downright information it must take the very highest rank in the now-it-can-be-told series.

ALLEN W. PORTERFIELD.

"THE RED FOG LIFTS," by Albert Muldavin (Appleton, \$2.). After fourteen years of rhetorical, emotional, statistical, political, sociological and other serious books on Russia, here is an informal, human and humorous book which does more to lift the veil from the granite face of Bolshevism than even Maurice Hindus. The author went to Russia in 1929, before the Wall Street crash, to sign a contract with the Russian government for a big deal. He is not anything but a quick-witted business man, humanly sceptical of Com-

munist and alive to the human factors involved in all business transactions. He does not pretend to give "the truth about Russia"; instead he tells "the truth about myself in Russia"—a super-human act of restraint.

And he discovers that people, even members of the Communist Party, remain people, even under Stalin; that women like to dance and flirt; that men like to grumble and look out for No. 1; and that Russia is not so much a "menace" as it is a "warning" to the rest of the world to write social justice into the overhead of capitalistic society. His conclusion is that "I am not as enthusiastic about conditions as I found them in Russia as much as I am depressed by what is going on in the rest of the world, especially in America."

This book is, to all intents and purposes, a rewritten diary, a sketch-book, describing what the author did and said and thought in the course of a brief stay at Moscow and a long trip through White Russia and the Ukraine. Of Russian origin and with a smattering of Russian speech, Mr. Moldavin saw little evidence of the "Potemkin villages" which Russian emigrés assert are used to deceive the unwary foreigner as to the true character of Soviet Russia. He thinks the Five-Year Plan is working pretty well and will make Russia an efficient competitor. Of considerable interest is his impression of the Wall Street panic, in which he lost heavily, as seen from Moscow, and the striking reverse it brought about in the relations of the company which he represented with the Soviet government. Where before the panic his company had been skeptical of Russia's ability to fulfill a contract, after the panic it was so skeptical of its own ability that Mr. Muldavin's mission was regarded as a great success because he did not get the contract.

It is, however, the human side of Soviet Russia that comes out most strongly in this book and is most worth seeing. Out of many incidents, there is space to quote but one, which is in many ways the best Soviet story that has yet appeared. A school-teacher is instructing a class of children in arithmetic:

She . . . . put a problem before the class. "If a man bought a hundred pounds of coffee for one hundred rubles and sold it for two hundred rubles, what would he get out of it?" The children must have been trained in such examples and answered in chorus: "He would get three months in jail." "Unless," added the teacher, "he was a foreigner and had a concession."

JOHN CARTER.

## Behind the Blurbs

A NUMBER of art books are to be brought out jointly by the Museum of Modern Art and W. W. Norton. In September will come a book on Modern German Painting and Sculpture, with 50 full-page plates. The second offering will be a book on Picasso. \* \* \* *The Columnist Murder*<sup>1</sup> is a fair to middling tale in which Tommy Twitchell, gossiping columnist of the *Blade*, is slain in a telephone booth in a theatre. Well-known Broadway names and characters are used and slightly distorted, Belasco becoming Tabasco and Winchell, Twitchell. Detectives, gangsters, dancers and journalists dash about through night clubs and penthouses, taking pot shots at each other and otherwise acting very sophisticated, but the fireman was right, and the clue to the murder is in Twitchell's last column. \* \* \* *Legendary France*,<sup>2</sup> a companion vol. to *Legendary Germany*, reviewed last year, is an informal guidebook that sketches pleasantly the remote past of various French provinces, particularly Provence and the Basque country. A good book to use in combination with Baedeker. \* \* \* *Mariners of Brittany*<sup>3</sup> is a book of the Breton fishing villages, illustrated, as was his former book on the Scotch fishing villages, with many charming pen drawings by the author. It can have been no simple task to gather all this material on Breton customs and superstitions, life at sea and on shore, for the Bretons are suspicious of strangers and slow to give their confidence. This is not a book to read from cover to cover, but if you dip into it once you will return to it. \* \* \* *The Selected Works of Sabatini*<sup>4</sup> include in a book of more than 900 pages *Captain Blood*, *Scaramouche* and *The Banner of the Bull*. \* \* \* How our early New England ancestors lived, the things they made and used, their arts and crafts, are discussed with much entertaining detail in *When Antiques Were Young*.<sup>5</sup> The author has spent many years gathering material, and in this book you will find much curious lore, and many quaint anecdotes of the past. \* \* \* *Gold, Men and Dogs*<sup>6</sup> is the autobiography of Scotty Allan, who went to the Klondike in '97, and became the most famous musher of dogs in the world, three times winning the Alaska sweepstakes. The book is packed full of adventure and incident, exciting and entertaining, and there is a chapter on training dogs that dog owners will profit by.

WALTER R. BROOKS.

1. By Lawrence Saunders: Farrar & Rinehart, \$2.00.

2. By Regina Jais: Dial, \$2.50.

3. By Peter F. Anson: Dutton, \$3.75.

4. Houghton Mifflin, \$2.50.

5. By Marion Nicholl Rawson: Dutton, \$5.00.

6. Putnam, \$3.50.