

The story of his life and work is fully told in Dr. Eckstein's volume—almost too fully as regards the sordid, irresponsible, even dissolute, personal conduct of his early life. In time learned societies and the world's greatest scientists hailed him as the greatest of research workers.

The book is a worthy and welcome tribute. It suffers, however, from the author's constant use of the "historic present" and the excess of snapped-off sentences of a few short words. This style is efficient in making verbal pictures; but continuously carried on it becomes wearisome. One ventures to criticize also the constant mingling of the personal and scientific narrative—alternate chapters on each phase would certainly have helped the general reader to master the scientific part better.

R. D. T.

"GABRIEL the Archangel" by Federico Nardelli and Arthur Livingston (Harcourt, Brace & Co., \$3.50). This biography of Gabriel D'Annunzio is badly over-written, but that fault is most appropriate to its subject. D'Annunzio is, both as an artist and as a man, a type usually unpleasing to non-Latins; and, to most of us, what is remembered about him is the beauty of Duse's face and voice in his play, *Gioconda*. Nardelli and Livingston do not evaluate or even discuss critically D'Annunzio's work, so that the biography does nothing to suggest to the uninformed the place which that work occupies in modern Italian literature. Politically, D'Annunzio has been a force in Italy, where his theatrical qualities endear him. There is a good deal about his political activity, especially since the beginning of the war, in this book; but more space is given to his numerous love affairs. To this reviewer D'Annunzio's life seems absurd and not a little pathetic—one melodramatic gesture after another, all well advertised. Readers who share the authors' interest in their hero will probably find the book satisfactory.

F. L. R.

### Behind the Blurbs

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY's *John Mistletoe*<sup>1</sup> and Jim Tully's *Blood on the Moon*<sup>2</sup> are both volumes of reminiscences. Beyond that they are about as different as any two books we have ever read. Tully is brutal, direct, undecorated; Morley is allusive, mellow, diffuse. If the mellowness sometimes becomes a little insipid, like that of any forced fruit, the brutality too becomes tiring. Both these gentlemen are a little too conscious of their special qualities, Morley of his

1. Doubleday, \$2.50.

2. Coward McCann, \$2.50.

charm, Tully of his virility. Not that their writing doesn't possess these qualities. Much of Morley's writing is very charming indeed. It is only when he becomes too conscious of it that it becomes either fine spun or pompous. Nevertheless you will thoroughly enjoy his recollections of Haverford and Oxford, of New York and Philadelphia, of books and newspapers and plays and their makers. But when you have read a few chapters of these, turn to Jim Tully and read for a corrective a little about saloons and jungles and jails. ❖ ❖ ❖ *Biology in Human Affairs* by Edward M. East is the Scientific Book Club May choice. ❖ ❖ ❖ A pleasing item printed by the Pauper Press is Mark Twain's short *Autobiography*<sup>3</sup>, with a frontispiece by Herb Roth, and reproductions of ancient woodcuts of some of the author's ancestors, one of them dangling from a tree. Unlike that of most of his humorous contemporaries, Mark Twain's work is as funny today as it was when it was written. ❖ ❖ ❖ *Solange Stories*<sup>4</sup> contains five cases solved by Solange, the lady detective. These are fairly good stories, with a slight supernatural tinge. The rather pretentious foreword seems a little out of place. Considering, as the author does, that, as far as she is concerned, the field of the detective story is a small and humble one, it seems to us that she should have been able to labor in it to better advantage. She should not attempt to patronize an art that she practices only indifferently well. ❖ ❖ ❖ Mr. Podesta was standing on his doorstep, arguing with his daughter's suitor, when he gave a loud yell and fell dead. A small triangular wound was in his chest, but no stiletto was found. In the bushes was a bootlegger, in the front hall was his son, the sorehead Lory. Who slew him and how you will find if you read *The Three Cornered Wound*<sup>5</sup>. And very cleverly it was done, too, with the aid of Mr. Henry Ford.

WALTER R. BROOKS.

3. Random House, \$7.50. (Limited edition.)

4. By F. Tennyson Jesse: Macmillan, \$1.75.

5. By George Dyer: Houghton Mifflin, \$2.00.

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## ►► The New Movies ◀◀

By CREIGHTON PEET

### ►► "The Public Enemy"

WILL HAYS tells us that when the present stock of gangster films has run through the projection machines, no more racketeer pictures will be made.

I can not believe this. No matter how many women's clubs, clergymen and judges wag their heads over these terrible "crime" movies, Hollywood is not permanently going to abandon its most profitable scenario. The recent accounts of Chicago's sharp-shooting gentry have brought too much approval from the critics, the public, and the box office. Furthermore, *The Doorway to Hell*, *Little Caesar*, *The Secret Six*, *Quick Millions*, and now *The Public Enemy*, are too alive, too exciting and too important a part of the economic and political life of the American community to be suppressed, even to protect a few half-witted, imitative morons. As long as gangsters continue to rob our tradesmen and fill the streets with gunfire, gang movies will be inevitable. I believe it is important that we see these films. Perhaps if we see enough of them some of us will get up enough energy to do something about gang rule.

*The Public Enemy*, to get down to today's installment, differs from the usual film in that it implies that gunmen are born as well as made. The story begins back in 1909 with two neighborhood boys who steal cheap watches under the orders of a boss thief. From this they go on to bigger and deadlier things, achieving manhood by killing their first cop. Then prohibition arrives and they begin to come into big money. *The Public Enemy* is bloody, brutal, and may to some appear shocking. Nevertheless, in spite of a few sappy episodes, particularly those featuring Beryl Mercer as the gangster's m-o-t-h-e-r, it is good entertainment.

In some respects it resembles *The Secret Six*, many of its incidents being taken from newspaper accounts. One of the more fantastic stories reproduced is

that of the gangster who is thrown by his horse during a ride in the park, and killed. To avenge his death the other members of the gang buy the unfortunate horse and put it on the spot just as though it were a human being.

### Worth Seeing

**Cimarron:** Edna Ferber's exciting story of the "land rush" days in Oklahoma.

**Connecticut Yankee:** Will Rogers has a lot of fun at the expense of King Arthur's knights.

**City Streets:** Slick gangster yarn directed by Rouben Mamoulian, who did *Porgy* on the stage.

**The Front Page:** Explosive and hard-boiled drama in Chicago's city hall. Superlative entertainment.

**The Secret Six:** Wallace Beery as a thick-witted, heavy-fisted beer runner who gets to be mayor.

**Skipper:** Percy Crosby's little boy is charming and real, never cute or coy.

**The Millionaire:** George Arliss being pleasant in a naive little comedy.

**Tabu:** South Sea Islanders in a simple and touching story as recorded by the late F. W. Murnau.

**Quick Millions:** Lively demonstration of how racketeers make you, and you, and you, and you support them in luxury.

### Not So Good

**Born to Love:** Constance Bennett's sufferings are still bringing gold to the box office.

**Dirigible:** Good air pictures, feeble story.

**Indiscreet:** Gloria Swanson, clothes and love problems.

**Seed:** A novel about birth control with birth control left out.

of a prominent motor car manufacturer, is masquerading as a humble mechanic. As such he is engaged by the heir to a small German kingdom, and accompanies his master back home. The master is supposed to marry a beautiful princess at this point, but as he is more interested in hotel chambermaids, the young American gets into his uniform and has a lovely time with the princess. The dialogue abounds in American slang, but you won't get much if you don't know German.

*Student Sein* has better tunes but the story is punk and they sing too often for comfort.

### ►► Other New Films

It looks as though William Powell was being deliberately ruined with bad pictures preparatory to his transfer from Paramount to Warner. *Man of the World* and the new *Ladies' Man* are dull and machine-made and I, for one, wish to enter a protest.

*Shipmates* is Robert Montgomery's first starring picture, and shows him as a mechanic on a Navy oil tanker who works up in the ranks, goes to Annapolis and marries the Admiral's daughter. It has good pictures of life aboard a battleship and is, in fact, the best publicity yet turned out by the Navy department, alias Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.