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The New Books

(Continued from preceding page)

Fiction

philosophizing or describing action, Marquand uses a poetic, swinging style.

The intellectual reader who may chance upon this novel will remain fascinated to the very end, and he will not need to apologize to himself for his interest, since there is nothing to insult the intelligence or strain the credulity of the discriminating.

MR. COLLIN IS RUINED. By FRANK HELLER. Crowell. 1924. \$2.

The fecund brain of Mr. Heller hatches ideas as a turtle hatches eggs. Not only is there resemblance in the number produced, but also in the potential individuality of each one; realized when the story (or turtle) is developed. One looks at a new volume bearing Mr. Heller's name and says to himself, "Here's another yarn about Mr. Collin playing tricks on his enemies and coming out with a pocketful of money. I know all his stunts by this time. But there isn't anything to do this evening. . . ." He opens the book and the prestidigitator has taken something new out of the fathomless hat. Amazing!

This time Mr. Collin goes in for authorship. Wielding a pen in each of his dextrous hands he writes an adventure story for a dime novelist who has written himself out, and literary criticism for a critic whose cynicism has incapacitated him for work. Through the medium of the story he relates the adventures of his two friends, Lavertisse and Graham, up to the time of their imprisonment by a Bolshevik politician. At this point Mr. Collin abandons his literary pursuits and enters the story in person. The threads of the narrative are drawn together and the dénouement and explanation follow quickly.

This book also differs from its predecessors in treatment. It is somewhat less romantic and whimsical, more intricate in plot and detailed in characterization and background. The scene is the chaos of post-war Italy, which affords excellent opportunity for Mr. Collin's "honest business transactions." The characters of the critic and the novelist are interestingly, if somewhat crudely, drawn, and show that Mr. Heller is not confined to the marionettes of ordinary mystery stories. The complicated plot leads at times to an incoherence and crowding of incident which might have been avoided with a little more care. An unevenness of style also seems to indicate that the author was in a hurry. Yet these are common faults, and may be forgiven in view of the small glory attached to writing this type of fiction. "Mr. Collin Is Ruined" is better reading than many a more pretentious book.

BOBBED HAIR. By TWENTY AUTHORS. Putnams. 1925.

Into this rollicking tale have been poured the high spirits of twenty writers who for the nonce have set aside their preoccupations to produce a mystery story of riotous sort. The book is written in sportive mood, with such evident enjoyment of its irregular character on the part of its authors as to lend it a gusto that transforms its extravagances from absurdities into delightful fooling. Despite the varied nature of its authorship—its contributors range from Carolyn Wells to George Palmer Putnam, taking in George Agnew Chamberlain, George Barr McCutcheon, Robert Gordon Anderson, Alexander Woolcott, Meade Minnegerode, John V. A. Weaver, Kermit Roosevelt, Dorothy Parker, Louis Bromfield, Gerald Mygatt, Rube Goldberg, Bernice Brown, Wallace Irwin, Frank Craven, H. C. Witwer, Elsie Janis, Ed Streeter, and Sophie Kerr on the way—the story moves forward with directness and consistency, though with the happy haphazardness that the gods vouchsafe to no single author. From the moment that its heroine, confronted with the dilemma of choosing between two lovers or losing an inheritance, and hitting upon the expedient of indicating her decision by the length of her locks, employs disguise as the means of delaying her announcement, until the final dénouement the interest of the tale never flags. The curious reader will find it not merely an amusing bit of persiflage but an entertaining study of authors outside of their usual genre.

DOMINION. By JOHN PRESLAND. Stokes. 1925. \$2.

This "novel of Cecil Rhodes and South Africa" is no effigy of romance, hung upon a frame of history, filled with indifferent fictional stuffing and animated by love. The

term, novel, in this instance is politely deceptive, like a black domino, despite the fact that two women, one vitally, have their subdued places in the accounting of Rhodes. On the other hand, he who likes his history, not diluted nor dry-as-dust, but charged with life and drama, is due to enjoy this story of mighty plans and epic endeavors.

Rhodes said, "Here's potential wealth—make it; potential energy—harness it; potential empire—take it for your own. You've got to work with the weapons at hand. Sentimentality isn't the road to achievement." "Dominion" typifies the stature of Cecil John Rhodes; it also includes of necessity the figure of his fearless little friend, Dr. Jameson, who helped him so greatly yet in the end unwittingly caused ruin and travail to the Empire Builder.

The story deals with the days of 1895, when Rhodes, in his 42d year, was Premier of Cape Colony, and the name of Jameson was bright with his exploits among the Matabele. For many today the name of Rhodes looms in greater relief than the many inflammable factors which gave birth to the impassioned conflict of the Boer War. "Dominion" is a cross-section of the times, its pictures give perspectives and close-ups of men and their motives, the chess-like plays in the origin of Jameson's ill-fated Raid, the swift gestures of the Raid itself, the sudden and dramatic aftermath to Rhodes, Jameson, and the actors in general. The story is handled with sympathy if not partisanship and is, we judge, fairly and convincingly painted in its human aspects. In any event, its appeal is intensely human. What fiction there is (if it be fiction)—the existence and position of Mrs. Maltravers, the cultivated courtesan and daughter of one, in Rhodes's life—runs like an ominous, minor thread—a sapper's wire which eventually explodes a mine beneath great undertakings.

"Dominion" contains the essence of romance; filled with suspense, momentum and the influence of great figures, its stuff unfolds powerfully.

Miscellaneous

CONSCIOUS AUTOSUGGESTION. By EMILE COUÉ and J. L. ORTON. Appleton. 1924.

There is nothing essentially new in this book for those who have already taken up the Coué doctrine to any extent. The most useful chapter is that devoted to the application of the doctrine to children, three chapters being devoted to this question. There are also chapters on Couéism and Diet, Physical Culture, Maternity, etc. There are undoubtedly some useful hints and suggestions in the book, which will help those who need advice and assistance along these lines. Books such as these will, at all events, help to antidote pessimistic tendencies and negative thoughts—such as expressed by Ambrose Bierce, in one of his facious moments, when he defined longevity as "the undue prolongation of the fear of death!"

CHILD-HEALTH LIBRARY. Edited by JOHN C. GEBHART. New York: Robert K. Hass, Inc. 1925. 10 vols.

These ten diminutive volumes issued by what was formerly the Little Leather Library Corporation bear the stamp of their value in the names on their title pages. Mr. Gebhart, the general editor, has entrusted the brief discussions of the principles of child-health to men and women of the caliber of Harbeck Halsted, Stafford McLean, Lucy H. Gillett, David Mitchell, and M. Alice Asserson. They in their turn have used the opportunity afforded them to present in concise, concrete, and simple form the cardinal principles to be regarded in the rearing of children. From the first volume, devoted to pre-natal care and the baby's birth, the series advances through the strictly medical aspects of child-health to discussion of child psychology and education, constituting as a whole an admirable brief library of the greatest value to mothers. The untechnical nature of the exposition, and authoritativeness of the material presented, should make this little set of widest usefulness. Its purpose and scope are set forth in a general introduction by Haven Emerson.

THE LITTLE CHURCH AROUND THE CORNER. By GEORGE MACADAM. Putnams. 1925. \$3.75.

Many New York churches have a far longer and varied history than that of the Church of the Transfiguration, now buried in the canyon of East Twenty-Ninth Street: many are more important architecturally

Speaking of Books

The English Bible

—its history and development—is a fitting subject for discussion on this four hundredth anniversary of the first translation of the New Testament into English from the Greek. Previous books have met only a part of the demand for information, and have largely disregarded the part played by the numerous private translations in the growth of the English New Testament. Dr. Edgar J. Goodspeed, in response to the tremendous amount of comment elicited by his famous *American Translation*, has written the complete story in *The Making of the English New Testament*. \$1.50, postpaid \$1.60.

When and Where

and how the New Testament was written is told in a vivid and popular manner in *The Story of the New Testament* by the same author. These two books, together with Dr. Goodspeed's *The New Testament: An American Translation* have been attractively boxed as a set of three, priced at \$6.00, postpaid \$6.25.

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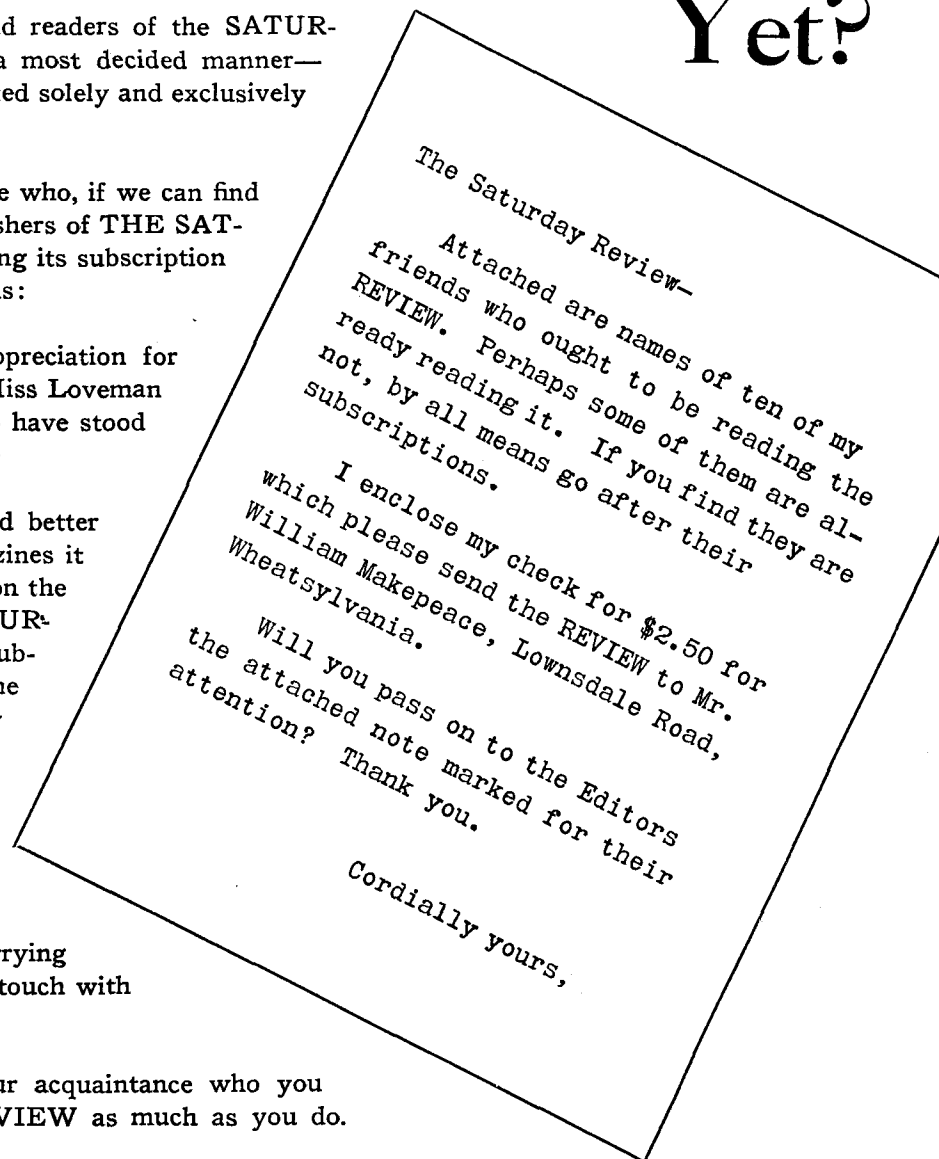
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The New Books

(Continued from preceding page)

and some have played a greater part in the social evolution of the city but it is certain that none is so widely known throughout the country as the "Little Church Around the Corner," which has given its title to a once popular novel, to a play that still holds the boards, now and then, after more than twenty years, and even to a moving picture show which still runs not only in America but has "travelled to South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia." That its fame rests upon an accident is true, but that it not all of the story: it is not entirely factitious. That would not have sufficed except for the fact that the incident embodies ideals of kindness and toleration that make lasting appeal, and for the further fact that these ideals were incarnated for seventy-five years in the two Rectors, Dr. George H. Houghton and Dr. George C. Houghton, uncle and nephew, whose ministries cover that long period.

It was just before Christmas, 1870, that a narrow-minded clergyman refused to bury the popular comedian, George Holland, from his church, on the ground that he was "a play actor," remarking to Joseph Jefferson, who was trying to arrange for the funeral that "there was a little church around the corner," where he might get it done, to which Jefferson, as he tells in his autobiography, replied—"Then if this be so, God bless the little church around the corner!" The incident got into the papers and a wave of indignation swept the country. The name had come to stay.

One result of this popularity was that it became a favorite church for those desiring to marry. But it never was anything of a Greta Green for although Dr. Houghton is said to have performed more than 7,500 marriages he also refused to marry more than twenty thousand couples. In fact, both the Houghtons were steadily orthodox, even sturdily old-fashioned in creed—refusing, for instance to recognize divorce or to marry an unbaptized person.

Mr. MacAdam has made a highly readable story of it, making full use of papers prepared by the late Dr. Houghton, recording many anecdotes and quoting freely from letters. It is well illustrated, and has value as local history but is even more worth-while as a "human document." It is to be regretted that it has no detailed index—which should be supplied in later editions.

SPRIT AND MUSIC. By H. ERNEST HUNT. Dutton. 1924.

One approaches this book with a certain trepidation. The subject is vast, the book is small. The connection implied in the title is a matter for controversy. It is frequently asserted that there is nothing in music beyond a collection of sensuously pleasing or displeasing sounds; that delight in music is purely physical, that the art is incapable of arousing the most profound emotions, that spirituality, in short, does not exist in music. One looks for a discussion of these points in Mr. Hunt's book, and for a host of kindred subjects. Does one find them?

We fear that the answer cannot be wholly affirmative. In spite of its title the book is unpretentious and evidently written not for the musician nor for the philosopher of aesthetics, but for the layman. It contains much that is obvious, sheer common sense. It is generally clear though not always strictly coherent; not without humor, it is sometimes sentimental; but it is admirably free from technicalities and concise. Yet it is all too concise and all too assured. There is no discussion here but a statement of one very definite attitude toward music. The man already sympathetic with its ideas will find in it a corroboration of what he himself has believed; others will remain unconvinced, aloof. In his anxiety to be comprehensible Mr. Hunt has become facile; and his book will make no converts. One regrets the terseness which has too severely pruned the thought and made it generally inadequate to the lofty title.

ENGLISH HOUSE GROUNDS. Photographic Views Compiled by MABEL PARSONS. Text by CLARENCE FOWLER. EUGENE CLUTE, Editor. New York: Mabel Parsons, publisher. 1925. \$7.50.

Owners of small and moderate size country places who love garden planning will derive profit and pleasure from this volume of photographic views of English gardens. The text is confined to a brief note by Mr. Clute, explaining how Samuel Parsons, the eminent landscape architect, had conceived

the idea of a collection of views of smaller English gardens; and to an excellent three-page article by Mr. Fowler on the characteristics and beauties of English plantings, formal and informal. He remarks sagely on "informality, a word that the amateur so dearly loves, but seldom understands." A primary virtue of English gardens is, of course, their charming naturalistic settings; it is difficult to appraise how much of their beauty comes from their being part of a whole countryside which seems to our eyes to be neatly planted and kept. The twenty-three plates of photographs in the present volume may be expected to stir longings and ambitions in many breasts to adopt at least some of the many suggestions to be gathered here. It is a delightful book.

A REAL A B C OF GARDENING. By A. J. Macself. Scribners. \$2.

PLATINUM METALS. By Ernest A. Smith. Pitman.

BRAIN TESTS. Prepared by John Monk Saunders and George Palmer Putnam. Putnam.

EVERYBODY'S PUZZLE BOOK. Compiled by Mary Virginia Worstell. Century. \$1.50.

PARTIES FOR OCCASIONS. By Claire Wallis and Nellie Ryder Gates. Century. \$1.75.

THE SWALLOW-BOOK (*Das Schwalbenbuch*). By ERNST TOLLER. English Version by ASHLEY DUKES. Oxford University Press. 1924. 85 cents.

This little paper-backed book,—it is scarcely more than a pamphlet—consists of a group of lyrics written by the famous young German playwright during his term in the fortress of Niederschönenfeld as a political prisoner. The author's dedication reads: "In my cell two swallows nested in the year 1922." Almost all of the poems have to do with the history of this pair of swallows,—their nest-building, the brooding of the mother-bird over her eggs, the first flight of the nestlings, the starvation of the second brood, the final departure of the parent birds. The effectiveness of the lyrics lies in the palpitant pattern of wings and bars, in crossed and broken lines. Toller has that painful sympathy with non-human life which is so intense in sensitive men who have suffered like hunted things,—the victims of "man, the political animal," in a new sense of this definition. The poems, none of them very long, all of them in unrhymed free verse, are marked by a deep tenderness for all helpless, wounded, denuded creatures, by a strong will to liberation, and by a gentle humor. Anatole France liked to insist that pity is the very essence of genius. If that is true, Toller's genius shows itself as luminously in his "Swallow-Book" as in his social dramas.

Mr. Duke's translation seems to be pretty adequate, as far as one can judge without having read the German. One wonders if the refrain "Zirizi, Zirizi, Zirizi" should not be transliterated "Tsiritsi, Tsiritsi, Tsiritsi," and lines like "My heart is drawn for winter stillness" are a feeble, awkward rendering of whatever Toller may have written. Such flaws are not too frequent to spoil the book, but one comes away from it well aware of the difficulty of englishing the text. It is perhaps a virtue of Mr. Duke's work that he sharpens the reader's desire to read the original.

EBB-TIDE AND OTHER POEMS. By JOHN MCALPIN. Four Seas. 1925. \$1.50.

A first book of lyrics. Here and there are lines of tenuous beauty. But, in general, there is little fresh phrasing and there are few themes not handled before by surer hands.

WIND FREE. By MARGUERITE DIXON CLARK. Mosher. 1924.

The letterpress, paper, and binding of books from the Mosher Press is always a delight. The lyrics in this volume are comparatively undistinguished, but occasionally reflect a quaint temperament in a rather charming way.

HAFON. By M. Somperides. Bookshop of Encyclopædia Britannica.

GOALS AFAR. By Samuel Valentine Cole. Marshall Jones.

DIONYSUS IN DOUBT. By Edwin Arlington Robinson. Macmillan. \$1.75.

FIRST POEMS. By Edwin Muir. Huebsch. \$1.50.

THE BEST POEMS OF 1924. Selected by Thomas Moul. Harcourt, Brace. \$2 net.

ONCE IN A BLUE MOON. By Marion Strobel. Harcourt, Brace.

THE VENTURE. By Jean Kenyon Mackenzie. Houghton Mifflin. \$1.50.

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Travel

GRECIAN ITALY. By HENRY JAMES FORMAN. Boni & Liveright. 1924. \$3.

Anyone who knows the beauties of Grecian Italy will appreciate the mood in which Mr. Forman has written his volume. It is less a description of that beautiful corner of the world—who could justly describe the magnificence of Sicily?—than a sustained outburst of enthusiasm, the reflection of the feelings which the island evoked in Mr. Forman and his fellow traveler rather than a portrayal of its scenic aspects and its points of historic and artistic interest. Mr. Forman has lent a lively character to his narrative by introducing into it jocular allusions to the small hardships and mishaps of traveling, and to the variant views of himself and his companion, and he has given it enough of specificity to make it recall pleasantly to the minds of others who have journeyed, as he has, to Palermo, and from it through the savage pass that leads out into the wind-swept, cactus-hedged plains before Segesta, to Girgenti, Taormina, tragic Messina, or Siracuse, the enchanting beauty of land and sea and sky in magnificent conjunction. And who that has shared it but would chuckle at his experience of ancient Sybaris—to cross for a moment to the Italian mainland? We are not so sure, however, as to the quality of that bean soup at the railway buffet, not if it bore any remote relation to the brand of breakfast served at that restaurant. We should have to sample it before we admitted its perfection, for . . . *Et ego in Arcadia*.

ALONG THE PYRENEES. By PAUL WILSTACH. Bobbs-Merrill. 1925. \$4.

Mr. Wilstach knowing little of the stalwart land that fringes France and Spain struck out blindly. Chance conversations determined his course, made him turn his steps to quiet old Toulouse, and gave him from there the finest far view of the Pyrenees. He went where and as he listed, and the result seems extraordinarily successful. Moreover, his should be a valuable guide-book, for he has done nothing that is impossible to the most casual traveller.

But for pure enjoyment and fireside consumption, Mr. Wilstach's volume falls far short of other books upon the Pyrenees and the far corners of France and Spain. He lacks a ringing sense of the picturesque, his Catalans are dry dust beside those of John Dos Passos, his historical facts are facts and little more. Time and again he rouses anticipation, as in his visit to the tiny land of Andorra, set high up among the peaks. But if Andorra is excellent in anticipation, its actual description is none so good.

But this is certainly not true of Mr. Wilstach's best chapter, that on Lourdes and its miracles. Here he loses all his surface dullness, his inaptness at description and his halting style, and really presents an absorbing picture of the pilgrims and their shrine. It is a pity that he did not set down Garassonne in prose as good.

Yet because Mr. Wilstach went everywhere that could be reached with due comfort, and because he followed the beaten trails that other travellers may themselves take, his is an excellent hand-book for the tourist. His running narrative sets down all sorts of interesting facts, points out the best places to see and the best ways to see them, and gives a good general idea of the fascinating land that lies between two countries and two seas.

(Continued on next page)

The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to Mrs. BECKER, c/o *The Saturday Review*.

A BALANCED RATION

MEEK AMERICANS. By Joseph Warren Beach (University of Chicago Press.)

THE STORY OF IRVING BERLIN. By Alexander Woolcott (Putnams.)

THE BEST STORIES OF SARAH ORNE JEWETT (Houghton Mifflin.)

"Years ago," says J. P. B., *Standford, Ky.*, "I read all the published works of Dickens except 'Edwin Drood': I could not stand the idea of starting and not finishing one of his tales. Some time back I picked up a copy with the intention of reading a few pages to see how it started, and before I knew it had reached the end." He has heard that the work has been "completed" by more than one writer, among the number Sir William Robertson Nicoll, and asks which succeeded best in "waving the magic wand of Dickens."

IT'S the old story, once you let that first chapter get you you are in for good. Long ago I read the second of the continuations, "John Jasper's Secret," by a New York newspaperman, Henry Morford, which like the first—a burlesque by Orpheus C. Kerr—identified Datchery with Bazzard. Though hopeless as a real continuation it is at least possible to get through it. But the third, "The Mystery of Edwin Drood Complete," published in Brattleboro, Vt., in 1873, is something awful: a "spirit pen" announcing itself as Charles Dickens goes droning on interminably in the best style of the Family Story Paper; it is one of the scandals of literature. Mrs. Richard Newton ("Gillan Vase") wrote a continuation, but this I have not read. The worth while books are not the continuations, but the attempts made by devoted scholars to figure out what Dickens would have done with the plot, given time to write down what was evidently clear in his mind to all but minor details. The first of these was Richard A. Proctor's "Watched by the Dead": a loving study of Dickens' "Half-Told Tale" (1887); this gave what was for long the best-known solution and is yet a popular one. J. Cuming Walters' "Clues to the Mystery of Edwin Drood" came in 1905, William Archer's "Mr. Datchery" and Andrew Lang's "The Puzzle of Dickens's Last Plot," in the same year. In 1908 came Edwin Charles's "Keys to the Drood Mystery"; "About Edwin Drood," by Henry Jackson, three years later, and in 1912 "The Problem of Edwin Drood," by Sir William Robertson Nicoll, the book of which J. P. B. has heard. This should not be confused with "Dickens's Own Story" by Sir W. R. Nicoll, published by Stokes last year: this latter is a series of studies of the novelist's personal life as it appears in his books, notably in the Dora and Flora episodes.

All these theories are summarized in "The Complete Mystery of Edwin Drood," by J. Cuming Walters (Chapman & Hall, 1912), the best single volume for beginning a Drood collection—for I may as well warn J. P. B. that he is in for it, and likely at any moment, once he gets the Drood fever into his system, to find himself tearing through all the literature on the subject. Walters's book begins with an account of the circumstances of the novel's production, pictures of Rochester and its cathedral, and identifications of a number of minor "Cloisterham" characters. It then gives the text as it appeared in print, with a fragmentary additional chapter discovered by Forster, and summarized statements of all famous

theories adduced to that time, with Walters's own contribution, and a tremendous bibliography of Droodian magazine articles. But did that settle it? By no means: after that came "The Murder of Edwin Drood," by Percy Carden (Cecil Palmer), that, as I admit in my chapter on mysterious disappearances in the "Reader's Guide Book," took Edwin out of the missing and moved him for me, at last, into the other column of the casualties. And I have just read "The Mystery of the Drood Family," by Montagu Saunders (Cambridge University Press, 1914), that has a new Datchery theory. Curiously, the one other solution, so far as I have read, to bring in a new person altogether to take the part of Datchery is the unspeakable "spirit pen," but this Datchery is not that one.

Speaking of Dickens, as I get a chance to do so less often than I would like, let me improve it by mentioning "When Mr. Pickwick Went Fishing," by Dr. Samuel W. Lambert, lately published by the Brick Row Book Shop. Dr. Lambert is a devoted Izaak Walton collector, and browsing these fields came upon a book of "Maxims for Anglers," published three years before Pickwick Papers, illustrated by Robert Seymour, and showing in several plates the unmistakable figure and appurtenances of the Sage of Goswell Street. Following this clue he establishes to his own content and quite probably to that of many others, the paternity of Pickwick, who appears as an angler only once in the Papers, and then in a vignette on the green cover of the parts, a picture left quite unexplained in the text. And so much of the Drood mystery has to do with green cover design, this little book indirectly qualifies as part of this literature, as it certainly does as a Dickens item of interest.

Now I wish someone would tell me where I can get reports of the trial of Jasper for the murder of Drood, conducted by British men of letters for some charity some years ago.

L. M., *Muscadine, Iowa*, asked weeks ago "if there is in print a collection of the tales, the very tall tales, that all lumberjacks tell of their mythical hero, Paul Bunyan?"

I HAVE just found the book, which was not printed until December, 1924, and has just reached a second edition. "Paul Bunyan," by Esther Shephard (McNeil Press, Seattle), is genuine folklore in process of becoming. The legend grows with his exploits, the giant hero digs the Columbia River for a log-chute, builds a bunkhouse so tall that the top stories must be put on hinges to let the moon ride by. Reading, one gets the atmosphere, the laughter, even the language of the old White Pine Camps where these yarns got to going back in the sixties and have in the meantime taken on considerable momentum. There is little enough of this type of American folklore in print, and I am glad this has been printed. Next month Knopf is to publish "Paul Bunyan," by James Stevens, with delightful woodcuts by Allen Lewis.

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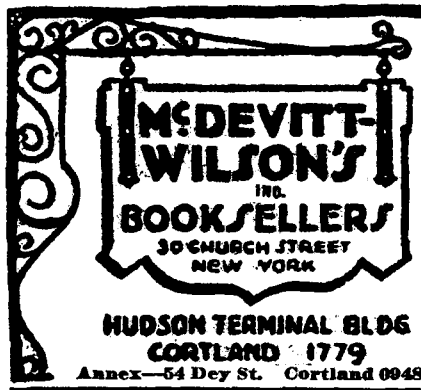
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