

## Foreign Literature

### History in Mosaic

DAS GELDWESEN IM KRIEGE. By ALEXANDER POPOVICS. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1925.

OSTERREICHISCHE REGIERUNG UND VERWALTUNG IM WELTKRIEGE. By JOSEPH REDLICH. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1925.

Reviewed by WILLIAM J. SHULTZ

THE mills of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace grind slow, but they grind exceedingly fine. For the past several years the Endowment has been publishing volume by volume its great series on the economic and social history of the World War. Each volume with its specialized field is a mosaic chip filling in the broad picture of the problems of the World War. These two studies present a fractional view of the Hapsburg Empire during the years preceding its dissolution; undocumented as is customary with the Endowment series, they are written with care and scholarship, and an absence of partisan spirit.

Dr. Popovics's book on the Austro-Hungarian finances during the War is the narrower of the two in its scope, but for students of finance it presents two interesting subjects for study. From the time of the *Ausgleich* onwards, the Dual Monarchy was faced by the supremely difficult problem of maintaining nationally independent but parallel currency and banking systems in Austria and Hungary; it was really exceptional financial ingenuity that enabled this shaky arrangement to last until the dissolution of the Monarchy. Because of this weakness, and because of general financial unpreparedness for war, the difficulties of Austrian wartime finance were greater than those of the other combatants; Dr. Popovics's analysis of these war-time problems is shrewd.

Professor Redlich's book is doubly valuable because it does not confine its study of the conflicting nationalist movements within the Empire to the years of the war, but traces them far back into the nineteenth century. On the one hand stood the Austrian political ideal—Austria to be coequal with Hungary but otherwise dominant over the minor nationalities, and within Austria the aristocracy and upper middle classes to be supreme; a centralized bureaucracy was to be the form of governmental organization. Protesting, striving against this system, were the national aspirations of the Poles, Czechs, and Slavic peoples, championing national tongues, national literatures, national home-rule; to add to the complication there appeared a growing class conflict, and an active Social Democratic movement. Parliamentary government by the Reichsrat became impossible in the face of bitterly hostile minority blocs.

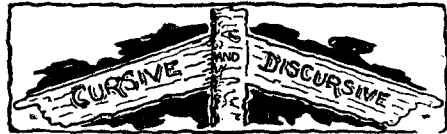
The early years of the war, with their subordination of civil government by military, with their domination of economic life by semi-military commissions, with their temporary war-time patriotism, dampened the internal struggle. The death of Franz Joseph, the Russian Revolution, foreign propaganda among the nationalist minorities, military reverses, brought the nationalist and social issues once more to the fore. And then 1918, and dissolution.

### Foreign Notes

IN "Joie dans le Ciel" (Paris: Grasset), C. F. Ramuz has written a charming and poetic tale, one which while not new in motif is so gracefully and deftly handled as to lend it genuine distinction. The story begins with the resurrection of the dead whom it portrays beginning their new lives in a continuation of their old homes now become heaven by reason of the fact that they are always happy there. For a time all runs smoothly and then there is a sudden eruption of the spirits of the damned. The tale thereafter becomes somewhat mystical but it remains none the less interesting and pleasing.

A new edition which has aroused general interest here is that of Father Huc's "Dans la Tartarie" (Plon), with memories of his voyage there and in Thibet and China. It was in 1843 that this Lazarist Father crossed China from end to end, from north of Peking to Lassa in Thibet, describing the country, the manners and customs of the people and their magic practices, and introducing his readers to many "lovable Chinamen." There are wonderful descriptions of the monasteries in Lassa. Critics agree that

the book has lost none of its freshness and charm in the passage of years. M. H. d'Ardenne de Tizac, director of the Cernuschi Museum in Paris, has written a learned Preface. Father Huc was a serious precursor of Ossendowski—whose new book "L'Homme et le Mystère en Asie" (in collaboration with L. Stanton Palen), has recently appeared.



TO continue from last week our spirited and intensely valuable analysis of America's greatest two he-male writers, James Oliver Curwood and Harold Bell Wright.

When our space ran out we were saying of Mr. Curwood that his latest novel, "The Ancient Highway," turns into a vivid movie. It does. The climax of the book, after another stupendous fight between two *habitant* giants, is the dynamiting of a dam by the St. Ives outfit, to start their logs down river, and the counter-dynamiting by the demon Hurd of a mountain into the river, to hold said logs back. This causes all kinds of a jam. Clifton, the hero, and another, go out on the log-jam to dynamite again, in order to free the logs. They succeed. But Bolduc is killed and Clifton, by every law of probability would have been obliterated. Antoinette whose coldness to him has by this time made him old before his time, and awful grim, dances out on the jam, (she must have been trained on the tightrope!) and they clasp each other fervently at last, with certain death howling all around them. The author's ingenuity is certainly taxed to the uttermost to get them out. But he does it. He does that thing. It is unbelievable. It was a million to one shot. But Mr. Curwood gets them out, and gets them married, and gets Hurd killed, and all ends in great peace and God's great content.

There is no doubt that Mr. Curwood can write excitingly. In spite of its preposterousness the sheer energy with which the climax is written stirs the pulse. As for the combat between the *habitants* that precedes it that simply reveals Mr. Curwood's intense liking for giant scraps and primitive violence. So, to sum up, we have lush local color, rapid exciting incident, primitive violence, conversation from *The Family Herald*, gentility and chivalrous nobility from the same, preposterous feats of strength, and characters essentially "dumb" clothed in a great glamour of adjectives and ranting speeches. It is great movie stuff as the movies are at present constituted. The book is of no possible value as literature, but a boy of twelve (and most of us have got a good deal of

the boy of twelve still in us) would get a real "kick" out of the feats of strength. The love-interest he would dismiss as twaddle, as it should be dismissed. But that has the appeal of Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth and Laura Jean Libbey.

And so to Mr. Wright. Mr. Wright, in general doesn't write as well as Mr. Curwood. Mr. Curwood has more originality in description and a mind more full of color, at least. Mr. Wright writes more woodenly. On the other hand he sometimes gets closer to the old dime novel than does Mr. Curwood. A westbound Overland train, a crying child, a "swagger man and a tawdry woman" who protest the "squalling brat,"—a young woman "who had been the object of their careless comments and thoughtless jests,"—and,—

"For shame!" she cried in a clear voice which was heard easily by those who had endorsed the sentiments of the couple. "Have you no pity in you at all? Or is it that your hearts are as cold as your eyes are blind?"

This is the very voice of the old melodrama, the kind of thing that brought stamping and piercing whistles from the gallery and a surf of hisses for the villain. And the poor little one's mother was veritably "in the baggage coach ahead." Mr. Wright is a true descendant of our sentimental balladists. If his talent had been for song not story he might have given us "The Face on the Barroom Floor" and kindred lyrics. Therefore I have more sympathy with Mr. Wright, as a matter of fact, than I have with Mr. Curwood. His is a simpler, more lyric gift, you might say! But just where, as Blanche Colton Williams has it, "so eloquent is his sense of the pathetic as to draw comparison with Dickens," and just where he is "as stark as Thackeray," I am at a loss to imagine. Dickens, just possibly, at Dickens' very worst, for a flash or two, but Thackeray—!

But no, on second thoughts we don't see even the slightest similarity to Dickens. And another exception we take to Miss Williams' estimate of Mr. Wright. She says, incidentally, "he is an admirable writer of dialect. We don't see it."

Mr. Wright loves dialect, though. And once he gets a Chinaman, or a Mexican talking, it is almost impossible for him to stop their loquacity short of pages.

Mr. Curwood celebrates, apparently, a grand old patrician girl of Canada; Mr. Wright a simple Irish Pollyanna. Both are equally lay figures. Yet there are occasional rather sly touches of humor and pathos in Mr. Wright's story that surprise one with a certain deftness. Mr. Curwood is always slathering on the purple patch; Mr. Wright occasionally writes almost naturally.

Mr. Wright also has his villain who is a monster of iniquity, yet he succeeds in making him (in a way) a recognizable human being. Mr. Curwood's villain never had a chance. Mr. Wright's hero is, furthermore, not quite so oratorical a *dummkopf* as Mr. Curwood's. In casting around for a parallel to Mr. Wright, the

late General Charles A. King comes to our mind. Take an old favorite like "Laramie," by the late General. The late General treated the Army frontier post of past days with about the same melodrama, heroism, villainousness, and sentimentality that Mr. Wright uses in interpreting "the desert and mountain world of Arizona and the Mexican border" of today. And General King's handling of dialect was about as excellent. He also preserved the high moral tone of his books while at the same time injecting lots of exciting incident. The arrest of Holdbrook, for smuggling arms and ammunition into Mexico, at the end of Mr. Wright's story, is quite in the good old General King tradition. General King would have used Nora and Larry O'Shea, if he had hit upon them, in just about the same fashion. The squaw-man Injun Pete is an accomplice in villainy who would have been dear to the General's heart, and Holdbrook, the suave villain, himself, is the type of villain the old soldier used again and again.

General Charles A. King was a very popular writer in his day. Mr. Wright, in taking up Arizona in a serious way, follows in his footsteps. He uses much the same recipe. But despite Miss Williams' dictum, his preaching has not perfected him in story-telling. We emerge greatly wearied by the stock characters and obvious claptrap of his tale. He is most certainly not an inspired novelist. He uses stereotype without the slightest freshness of style or language. His present story is, on the whole, less preposterous than Mr. Curwood's, but Curwood can at least achieve a more stirring climax, preposterous as it is.

What childishness is in the concocting of both these books, what eternal childishness! For that reason they appeal so strongly to the eternal childishness of three fourths of our population. Yet better books have also appealed. As we recall it, Owen Wister's "The Virginian" was once a best-seller. Wister could take Western material, concoct an obviously heroic love-story in an obviously dramatized setting, and yet shape his material so dexterously, with so pungent a gift of observation, so innate a sense of style, that his humors of characterization and his narration of exciting incident enthralled. It is all in the quality of an author's imagination. Mr. Wright writes better than the dime novelist, but the quality of his imagination is the same. His stories are not so good as our friend Colonel Ingraham's stories because they are not wrought so wildly well. Colonel Ingraham builded better than he knew. He achieved fantasy. Mr. Wright only achieves rather wooden melodrama. To "The Virginian" Wister brought a high quality of imagination and a genuine gift for writing. And those are quite different things.

W. R. B.

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## The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

## Art

JACOB EPSTEIN. Scribners. \$2.

This well made album in quarto, which is nearly equally divided between text and plates, over thirty of each, is a good earnest of the new series, "Contemporary British Artists." The reproductions are excellent and well selected and the text no more flattering than is usual. Indeed it is difficult to take any temperate attitude towards the young Russian Jew who within a few years of his leaving America was the portent of the aesthetic radicalism of London. Epstein is not merely an artist but rather a legend and a myth-occasion of the sincerest extravagances whether of laudation or dispraise. It is odd that so fragmentary an achievement—mostly busts—has worked so solid an attitude *pro* and *con*. Yet the work is the most assertive; we cannot be indifferent to it. What is the worth of the emphasis?

First it is impressive enough. These heads of men and women have been ravaged and wrung, by suffering, by passion. Then the mere idiom combines interestingly two usually incompatible qualities—maximum of genuinely sculptural mass; maximum also of atmospheric envelopment. Epstein is a whole-hogger, denies himself nothing, spares his spectator nothing. With the exception of the Maillol-like architectural sculptures for the British Medical Association Building, London, the whole product is below or above taste,—is sinister, individual, barbaric. The issue as to whether this titanism is genuine or a remarkably persuasive affectation cannot be settled in our time. In any case the power whether native or assiduously cultivated is unmistakable in such heads as Alolores and Mrs. Epstein and Selina and R. B. Cunningham-Graham. At first sight such things are irresistible, and then steals in a suspicion that we really have to do with a vulgarization of finer modes—that of the extreme Orient and of the Italian Renaissance. The great sculptors are as a class less urgent, and, vigorous as is Epstein's mood, it suggests less the Begarellis, and Mazzonis, its obvious prototypes, than, say, a Puget up-to-date who has passed through Cubism.

THE WAY TO SKETCH. By Vernon Blake. Oxford University Press. \$2.50.

## Belles Letters

AMERICAN POETRY AND PROSE: 1607-1916. Edited by Norman Foerster. Houghton Mifflin. 1025. \$4.

This is an excellent collection from American literature, better based, better chosen, and better edited than any text-book anthology we have, and displaying in its selection the new conception of American literature as an expression of a developing continent as well as a division of general English. The selections from the standard authors are satisfying, and the colonial material included and the literature of the renaissance in American letters which began about 1906-1910, give the book a scope and significance absent from earlier volumes of the kind. The short story is not adequately represented, partly because of space limitations. Nevertheless, one feels that Stockton, Bierce, Sherwood Anderson should have had their pages. Miss Millay also has surely won her place with Frost, Miss Lowell, Lindsay, and Sandburg. Audubon, among forgotten writers, might have been given a page with advantage; the like for the too little praised Clarence King. But this is a good book, where the best writers may be read generously, and proportion and emphasis are kept.

HORACE AND HIS ART OF ENJOYMENT. By ELIZABETH HAZELTON HAIGHT. Dutton. 1925. \$3.

Horace is—like that rather Horatian Englishman, Alexander Pope—a writer whom you may open anywhere and find a brilliant line. His works are like a book of familiar quotations—varied, but inconsecutive and disunified. We pick the man out of his writing bit by bit, and at the end have still the task of assembling these bits. Such a task Miss Haight has accomplished, escaping most of the pitfalls. She has, for instance, made no effort to label Horace as definitely Stoic or Epicurean, recognizing, as scholars sometimes fail to do, that his philosophy was eclectic, not to say fluid; again, she has not dogmatized as to the precise location of the Sabine farm, though inclining to the Licenza site. She has paraphrased her writer freely, and perhaps

too often. Her purpose seems to have been to give an orientation for the amateur, and she has done this gracefully. Possibly the best thing in the book is her account of Horace's feeling for nature; our notion that the ancients cared little for natural beauty, while essentially sound, wants some modification, and this Miss Haight gives.

FORTY-TWO FABLES OF LA FONTAINE. Translated by Edward Marsh. Harpers. \$2.

CHARLES DICKENS AND OTHER VICTORIANS. By Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. Putnam.

CREATIVE CRITICISM. By J. E. Spingarn. Harcourt, Brace. \$1.25.

THE ROAD. By Hilaire Belloc. Harpers. \$3.

H. W. M. A SELECTION FROM THE WRITINGS OF H. W. MASSINGHAM. Edited by H. J. Massingham. Harcourt, Brace. \$4.

PERSEUS, OR OF DRAGONS. By H. F. Scott Stokes. Dutton. \$1.

ORIGINS OF POE'S CRITICAL THEORY. By Margaret Alterton. University of Iowa.

LITERATURE FOR THE BUSINESS MAN. By Gerald E. Se Boyar. New York: Crofts. \$2.50.

## Biography

MEMORIES OF LONG AGO. By an Old Army Officer, LIEUT. COL. O. L. HEIN, U. S. Army, Retired. Putnams. 1925.

Lieut. Col. Hein is a well-known officer of the Old Army. He served with credit in Indian campaigns, added materially in developing the Infantry and Cavalry School at Fort Leavenworth and was a progressive Commandant of Cadets at West Point. As Military Attaché at Vienna he won much praise from his superiors always making the best of his opportunities. As a tactical officer at West Point he was dubbed by the Cadets "the Count," a tribute to his distinguished appearance. Few are the Tactical Officers who receive complimentary nicknames. He was retired for disability in 1904. The book could have been condensed to advantage. Apparently begun as a family record it contains matter more interesting to the family than to the general public. It is carelessly written and the English is not undefiled, but the author forestalls criticism by stating that it was not intended by him for publication. Nevertheless it is a book well worth reading. Nearly a third of it is taken up by the account of his service as Military Attaché at the Court of Vienna. There are many amusing anecdotes and his descriptions of celebrities he has known, beginning with Abraham Lincoln, are graphic.

THE LIFE OF WESLEY. By Robert Southey. Oxford University Press. 2 vols. \$1.50 each.

BEN JONSON. Edited by C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson. Oxford University Press. 2 vols. \$14.

LEWIS MILLER. By Ellwood Hendrick. Putnam. \$3.

THE TRAGIC LIFE OF VINCENT VAN GOGH. By Louis Piérard. Translated by Herbert Garland. Houghton Mifflin. \$3.50.

ROBERT OWEN. By G. D. H. Cole. Little, Brown. \$4 net.

## Drama

PLAYS OF THE WORKSHOP. Brentanos. 1925. \$1.25.

This fourth volume in the series of Harvard Plays sponsored by Professor George P. Baker, now of Yale, contains four one-act plays particularly adapted to production by Little Theatre Groups and Amateur Organizations. The collection does not seem as well balanced as some of the earlier volumes in the series, for out of the four, three are tragedies. Of these, "The Slump," by Frederic Lansing Day, is most successful. Here we have a tragedy of everyday monotony, handled with remarkable economy of dialogue and detail. The three characters are finely contrasted and the lines suggestive without becoming sentimental or losing any of their realism. Of the others, "The Mourner," by James Mahoney, shows the most originality and imagination. If there are times when this last named quality seems to run into rather thin and overstrained fancy, the charm of many of the lines and the clever handling of the Pierrot-Columbine characters, more than makes up for this. "The Strongest Man" by Elizabeth Higgins Sullivan, is a tragedy with a background excellent for its American atmosphere of a French community near New Orleans. But the play itself suffers for want of cutting and dramatic heightening.

(Continued on next page)

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