

The Phoenix Nest

EVERY Christmas season we spend as many seventy-five cents as we can afford upon copies of the gorgeous Christmas numbers of the English periodicals. * * * We don't consider English magazines as much, except around Christmas. * * * But then the profuse and luscious color work of *Pears's Annual* and *The Sketch*, of *The Tatler*, the *London Illustrated*, *The Queen*, and so on, ravish our senses! * * * This year we purchased *The Sketch* and *Pear's* and the Christmas *Punch*. * * * The spirit of Merrie England, though the material treated is modern, persists in these pages. * * * Of late years the delicate and delightful drawing of Mr. Ernest H. Shepard has shyly insinuated itself even into American magazines, what with Christopher Robin Hood holding up all the burgesses at the point of Mr. Milne's sparkling verse. * * * Mr. Shepard should certainly share fifty-fifty in the acclaim of "When We Were Very Young"! He is a finished artist. He can draw slimmer and prettier young ladies than appear anywhere save in *La Vie Parisienne*. * * * In the Christmas *Sketch* he has a delightfully-tinted series of pictures called "The Fan That Caused the Mischief." It is worth the whole number. He possesses a fancy that would have pleased Watteau. He might himself have painted fans with Carlo Van Loo. * * * In *Pear's*, Hugh Walpole tells a ghost story, illustrated by Maurice Greiffenhagen in a sinister style we early loved. *Arthur Machen* writes of "Christmas Science." *Punch* has, of course, Shepard and George Morrow and Lewis Baumer and other names as familiar,—and plenty of color plates. * * * If you are a bachelor, which we are not, the best way to spend Christmas eve is to lay out about ten dollars buying up all the London Christmas periodicals, and peruse them at your ease in front of lambent flames,—with something enheartening at your elbow. * * * Speaking of *La Vie Parisienne*, who does do the innocently-outrageous and madly fascinating young females that caper all over several of its pages in every issue? We do not know his name. But certainly he adds greatly to the gaiety of life. * * * Now that we've made this start, after returning from the new uptown Brentano's, we might as well go on and devote this particular Phoenix Nest to magazines. * * * A new one, which claims to be the first in book-form to be published in the United States, is *The American Parade*, edited by W. Adolphe Roberts. It numbers among its collaborators Richard Le Gallienne, Ethel Watts Mumford, George Sterling, Olga Petrova, Orrick Johns, Jacques Le Clercq, and others. * * * Mr. Le Gallienne relieves himself of a rather belated and stupid parody of "The Wasteland" therein. Sterling contributes a good poem. Gamaliel Bradford contributes a story. Orrick Johns interprets the under-rhythm of America in "The Big Tune." * * * Those are only a few of the contributions. * * * The magazine has a certain verve. But holy smoke, what a jacket! A cheap amateurish drawing that should im-

mediately be discarded! * * * And the format is certainly open to improvement. * * * We see that the money of Charles Garland of Massachusetts is getting behind a revival of the *Masses* which Max Eastman, Floyd Dell, John Reed, and Boardman Robinson piloted through several stormy years, till it turned into the *Liberator*. * * * If you want a taste of the old *Masses* quality, by the way, read Genevieve Taggard's "May Days," (Liveright) an anthology of the poetry that used to appear in it. * * * Michael Gold, Joseph Freeman, James Rorty, Hugo Gellert, John Sloan and Egmont Arens are now taking hold and intend to make a new *Masses* which shall not copy the old one, but will swear allegiance, nevertheless, to the international labor movement. * * * It will not, however, have any connection with any political party, and will be responsible to no special propaganda. * * * "New forms, new themes, new artists, new laughs, and indignations," is its slogan. The publication address is at present 799 Broadway. We certainly wish this venture well! * * * In the Christmas book number of *The Independent*, John Farrar explains fully from a publisher's point of view, his attitude concerning what is known as "clean fiction." He has often been flagrantly misquoted. His paper elucidates what he really thinks. * * * In the same number Arthur Maurice is rather interesting concerning "The Best Sellers of Today and Yesterday." * * * The *Theatre Arts Monthly* for December, in "The Children of Skelt," contains an article by Velona Pilcher (it must be an assumed name!) upon toy theatres as they evolved in the early nineteenth century. * * * It was a conspiracy between the printseller and the theatre proprietor. The printer sent his artist to sketch theatrical performances of the time. These sketches were made into prints sold for a penny. Then came the "tuppence colored." "The Miller and His Men" was popularized for the nursery in this way as early as 1813. * * * There are eight huge volumes of this juvenile drama, prints and text, now in the British Museum, collected by a legendary Londoner, one Ralph Thomas. * * * W. West was the first of the print-sellers, and the Skelts and Pollocks are even better known. * * * All this is told by the writer of the article, and much more. * * * We ourselves procured several years ago a number of the Pollock plays, with toy theatre, through the Bookshop for Boys and Girls in Boston. Several modern children that we know delighted and continue to delight therein. * * * Which reminds us that here on our desk lies *The Horn Book*, published four times a year by that very bookshop. It is one of the most interesting catalogues of books for children now issued. * * * In an interesting analysis in the Christmas number of the *Bookman* (whose rich contents, by the way, include work by Thomas Burke, DuBose Heyward, Stella Benson, Zona Gale, Aldous Huxley, H. L. Mencken, Mary Rustin, and so on), Herbert S. Gorman considers judicially the truth about the

Pulitzer Prize awards. * * * Excepting the awards for history and poetry, the other awards are primarily ethical and not primarily for pure literary excellence. Thus are judged novels, biographies, and plays; and it is a holy wonder, under the circumstances, that Eugene O'Neill twice pulled down the golden check for drama! * * * Mr. Gorman's analysis is, as we say, judicial and well-restrained,—but we ourselves get a little warm when we consider the words limiting the fictional award to some work that "shall best present the wholesome atmosphere of American life, and the highest standards of American manners and manhood." * * * This is surely about as jejune a qualification as was ever set forth! Only a fool believes that the present phase of social and economic organization in America—and elsewhere—makes for a truly "wholesome atmosphere." * * * And what is the highest standard of American manners? * * * It is certainly not to be found, to our way of thinking, among the privileged classes who most pride themselves upon it. * * * And the highest standard to which American manhood at present subscribes is the money standard. * * * "Red" Grange we suppose would be cited as a fine clean upstanding example of American manhood. At any rate he is a whale of a football player! But the *New Republic* of December 9th made a few side-remarks on "Red Grange in Business" which we feel to be not without their pertinence. * * * "Red" asserted "on the air" that the great constructive thing about football was that it is the sport not the money that matters. And yet, as the *New Republic* says, we now for the first time see the possibilities of football as a business, a new aspect to which Mr. Grange himself has most pointedly called our attention. * * * Everything in America is, in fact, sooner or later turned into big business. What the *New Republic* calls "the dominant business culture" is entirely dominant. * * * We have seen the business of writing books turned into big business. * * * And all of us who write are out to make just as much money out of the marketing of our product as we can get for it. * * * And writers, in so far as they are good business men also, are surely just as fine clean upstanding examples of American manhood as even "Red" Grange. * * * The making of money and the making money work are the standards of American manners and manhood. * * * Well, what's wrong with it? * * * Nothing. Everybody knows it, everybody does it. * * * Only, if a truly honest and powerful novel were written around that central theme, the chances are that it would be branded as "cynical," "grossly material," "a misinterpretation of the high ideals of American life," "sordid," "brutalizing," and all sorts of other things. * * * At any rate, it could not procure the Pulitzer Prize! * * * There have been a number of good novels so written. Mr. Dreiser has written about the money standard realistically and unsentimentally. * * * He is by many regarded as a "sordid" novelist. * * * Well, now we're going to jump into the refrigerator and cool off. * * * Osta Mañana!

THE PHOENICIAN

NOTICE!

We are inclined to believe that many readers of *The Saturday Review* disagree with Mr. Leonard Bacon's review on December 5th of Christopher Morley's *Thunder on the Left*.

We believe that many readers rather agree with the N. Y. *Times* that *Thunder on the Left* "for sheer beauty and poignancy ranks with anything published on this side of the Atlantic in the memory of our generation."

AFTER NEXT WEEK, therefore, WE SHALL RUN THIS COLUMN BLANK until we receive from readers enough letters stating their views on this matter to fill it.

If you have formed your own opinion of *Thunder on the Left*, embody it in a letter to us; and with your permission we shall use the best of the letters so received in this space.

DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & CO.
Dept. B. A. Garden City, N. Y.

BORZOI
BOOKS

The year's best biography



CATHERINE THE GREAT

by KATHARINE ANTHONY
Author of "Margaret Fuller"

"Out of a monstrous legend she has brought her subject alive, has cleared away the debris from her name and has given to the work of clarifying the motives of Catherine the same considering scientific mind, the same ardor of truth that she devoted to MARGARET FULLER."

—Katherine Ann Porter in the N. Y. *Herald-Tribune*. 3RD LARGE PRINTING, \$4.00

For young and old



BROOMSTICKS AND OTHER TALES

by WALTER DE LA MARE
with 34 woodcuts by Bold

"He fills the measure up and runs our cup over with tales of enchantment and beauty such as he, and he alone, can write. . . . Broomsticks will be a rare, rare treat for families that read aloud at night around the Christmas fire."—*Marcia Dolphin in the Bookman*. \$3.50.

ALFRED A. KNOPF, 730 Fifth Avenue, NEW YORK