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The New Books

(Continued from preceding page)

Biography

history of America, while at the same time she experienced the vicissitudes of fortune which forced her family from the life of Boston to the comparative hardships of existence in the country. Her journal covers the little happenings of a united family, the births, the deaths, the marriages that meant so much to the closely-knit circle, but it reaches out to a wider interest through the introduction of occasional episodes of national importance and its fleeting glimpses of public figures.

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Portrait of a Publisher. Appleton. \$5 net.

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THE LIFE OF LORD WOLSELEY. By Major-General Sir Frederick Maurice and Sir George Arthur. Doubleday, Page. \$6 net.

CONFESSIONS OF A DEALER. By Thomas Rohan. Stokes.

Fiction

OBEDIENCE. By MICHAEL SADLEIR. Houghton Mifflin. 1925. \$2.

Michael Sadleir is too aware that he writes of the Mid-Victorian Era. Thus he takes himself and his subject with a seriousness almost amounting to pomposity.

There are twists to his phrases that become rather annoying. This is not to quarrel with a man's style which is, essentially, the man himself. But somehow you gather the feeling that this is not a manner of writing native to Mr. Sadleir, but an affectation calculated—perhaps falsely—to evoke the England of the 1860's from the past. Yet an artificiality of language can not help to portray an era that, if viewed from a point within itself, was no more artificial than our present age. That is to say, Mr. Sadleir is writing at the Mid-Victorian years, not of them; writing from the outside. Hence his excessive awareness of his appointed task. He seems to admonish himself: "I am writing of the Victorians. I am writing of the Victorians. I must not forget it!" Therefore, there is about the book "Obedience" a somewhat confectionary air. The Victorians, for all the turns of phrase, do not live for us vividly in this novel.

This is not to say that the reader is not interested in their fortunes; Catherine Ormand is quaint. The man she loves, Frank Martindale, below her in social station, is a fair hero. And Felix Ormand, Catherine's brother, is a good sample of a cad. Old Harry Ormand, the father, is a type figure of the blustering head of the family inveighing against the daughter's choice of husband. These are all adequately sketched.

But it seems that Mr. Sadleir's true problem lay in some sort of comparison between

the psychology of the era he writes of and this present era, or by accounting for the relationship between father and sons or daughters. Only in such an analysis can there be an indictment against the customs of the age—and it does seem that the author has attempted to draw up an indictment. But he leaves us cold at the charge, because he has written prettily and, as has been said, at his subject, instead of from the inside outward.

Then too, that pompous seriousness. It gets in the way. It creaks stiffly. It gives a sense of artifice destructive to those touches of reality which are needed to make a vanished day once more vivid. This is, then, just a pleasant story.

THE LOVE OF MONSIEUR. By GEORGE GIBBS. Appleton. 1925. \$2.

We are often assured, especially by writers of the modern clinical school of fiction, that the costume novel, and the romance of gallant adventure are quite out of fashion, and that the reader of today is far too serious-minded to be entertained by swashbuckling yarns. The issue of a new edition of this early work by Mr. Gibbs, first printed in 1903, throws some doubt on that assertion. One may suspect that popular taste has not very greatly changed, after all. Mr. Gibbs himself has come on quite a bit during the past twenty years: it is a long step from this to "The House of Mohun." But this is also good work of its kind: a swinging narrative, smoothly phrased, and climbing to a good spectacular finish. It dates in the days of King Charles. Monsieur is a gallant French adventurer, known also as "Bras-de-fer." We meet him at the moment when his pursuit of Mistress Barbara Clerke has landed him in trouble, which leads to his expulsion from London and to royal disfavor. His wanderings extend to the well-known Spanish Main, which was full of pirates, privateers, and no end of excitement. Thither, of course, the lady has to follow him, to take part in mutinies and sea fights, as a lady of the times should, ultimately to be rescued in due course. It moves: an entertaining tale.

MESSALINA. By VIVIAN CROCKETT. Boni & Liveright. 1924. \$3.50.

Mr. Crockett expands the stark narrative of Tacitus, which is printed as an appendix to show the fidelity of the modern account to history, into a sixty-thousand-word story in prelude and four chapters. It begins with Messalina in Antioch, where almost unimaginably, at twelve years of age, the future notorious empress visits, unattended and at night, the pleasure park of Daphne, and in the grove whose turf is strewn with reckless couples learns the ways of adult life; continues in Rome with the young wife of the silly and disgusting emperor Claudius, whom she dupes as she follows unrestrainedly the leadings of her eager and vicious spirit in affairs with Mnester the actor, Myronides the military tribune, and Silius the handsome young noble; and concludes with her perishing by the sword when the outraged and fearful emperor learns that she has actually gone through the form of marriage with Silius and perhaps is conspiring against his own life and throne.

Mr. Crockett's book, written either for or from a screen play, has the features, good and bad, of the cinematographic. Its material is mechanically well managed, its action is visualized in clear outline, it is divided into episodes, it abounds in palaces and porticoes and gardens and groves and imperial functionaries and pratorians, it makes a valiant attempt at historical accuracy and advertises its success—and it plays up sex. This is cinematographic amorosness transferred to the page; the swimming eye, the subtle and half-closed eye, the quickening pulse and the heaving bosom, the lithe and graceful body, the seductive and rhythmical movement, his arms that crush her against him and hers that coil around him and take him in the toils, the gown that slips from the shoulder to the instantaneous incandescence of the beholder, the kiss, fiery, close-pressed, clinging, with linked-sweetness-long-drawn-out, from lips like bees greedy for nectar to lips like scarlet petals, and other familiar forms of divine voluptuousness—they are all here. Yet not all this detailed "passion" makes Messalina a real figure, and the reader of austere and economical Tacitus with imagination unaided except by suggestion will have a deeper impression of reality than the reader of this amplification, which is executed not without art, but is a series of sexual episodes rather than a novel, and in spite of all its tragedies is not tragic.

Speaking of Books

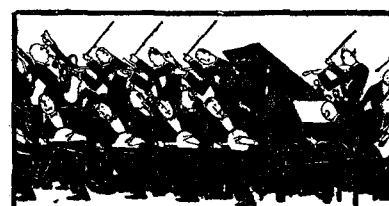
Spokesmen

of the progressive idealism of their day, organs of a noble discontent with the established order, and heralds of a golden age—these were characteristic functions of the early Hebrew prophets. From Elijah and Amos to Zechariah and Daniel is a succession of uncompromising upbraiders of their age and champions of a higher ideal. How they fought and suffered, and finally achieved a religion that commands admiration is the inspiring story that this book tells. *The Prophets and Their Times.* By J. M. Powis Smith, \$2.25, postpaid \$2.35.

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DREAMING SPIRES. By DIANA PATRICK. Dutton, 1925.

"Dreaming Spires" as a title holds a certain charm, as a novel it gives less satisfaction. Conceivably it is meant to dwell upon the idea of "ivory towers" of the spirit. But whatever facets of interpretation either the author had in mind or readers may consider, the latter are apt to find themselves inadequately warmed at its romantic fires and be tempted to stir them by skipping pages.

This is the story of a little hedonist (in London) who deprived of luxury, still craves it, of course, and faces the street. That she shrinks from paying the price on either hand seems to be a matter of indecision rather than an aversion of character. Dallas Coventry's mother died from shock after Dallas's stepfather went to prison for great financial indiscretions in the city. Cast upon the street and untrained to make a living she shrinks from the publicity of her stepfather's ruin and lives in a boarding house for a time by pawning her costly knick-knacks. A thieving servant puts an end to that and she gets nearer to Piccadilly, a euphemism for selling herself. This thought she dallies with throughout the book. She is on the verge of becoming Maxwell Craven's mistress when she meets in his house, Leolyn Adair, a mighty financier and a most sardonic character. A twist of fate enables her to make a bargain with this suave misogynist and she enters his home as a ward. This is the best part of the story. The little intrigante falls in love with Valentine, Adair's beloved son, something the older man forbids. He counters with a marriage offer first from Craven, then himself. It is quite an *impasse* after her precarious, not particularly engaging adventures, but she finally gets over thin ice and makes dry land. Miss Patrick characterizes well but suffers from impertinent detail (such as analyzing nearly thirty contemporaries).

THE COPY SHOP. By EDWARD HUNGERFORD. Putnams, 1925.

Mr. Hungerford has written a story of newspaper life that will help make the reader understand why young men used to run away from remunerative careers to try the newspaper game, even as farmer boys used to desert from the plow to ship to sea. The old three-masters are gone—ships and dailies. That only helps season the romantic flavor of either subject. "The Copy Shop" catches the zest of the old-time editorial room, and it catches something beside.

It takes a young small-town collegian, carries him through the funny stage of cub-reporterdom, and sees him at last to his full growth into a star reporter. That is all very well, so very well that plenty of writers have done it before. But there is more. This reporter, living without any real foothold of his own in life, begins to slip. He uses up his little stock of impressionability, of enthusiasm. He marries someone that he had better not. He passes very nearly into the stage of that most extinct of living beings, the burnt-out, morose, journalistic has-been.

That part of the book is not only well enough, but good. The bloom of stars on Park Row used to rub off strangely fast sometimes, and the business supplied but little gold to brighten them up when the real bloom had gone.

The favored few developed into novelists, editorial writers, or country newspaper owners. The one in "The Copy Shop" finds such a happy ending, none too soon. Before making his providential escape via the last page, he finds out the rough side of the old newspaper life, with its fantastic human contacts, with its subtly exhausting hustle. Mr. Hungerford has known at what points to lay aside the sentimental livery decreed by custom as proper to the treatment of newspaper men, artists, and such-like Bohemians. But he has preserved the air of fascination that clung to newspaper life in its fine days. He has pictured one newspaper office, the old *Sun* shop, from the inside, and told much of the life of the news-getters of twenty years or more ago as it really was.

YOUTH RIDES WEST. By WILL IRWIN. Knopf, 1925. \$2.

The hardened reader of Western fiction will find nothing new in "Youth Rides West." A young New Englander, Robert Gilson, graduated from Harvard in the seventies, goes west. He picks up a partner, Buck, throws in with him, and they travel by burro train to Cottonwood, a gold rush camp in the Rockies. On the way they overhear, as it were, a hold-up. A charming woman in the stage pities the nigh white leader, the only casualty in the

affair, and across the head of the dying horse, Gilson falls in love with her. She is on her way to Cottonwood, but not for gold; what she is prospecting makes the mystery, and a rather shop-worn mystery it is. Gilson becomes a reporter on the *Cottonwood Courier*. The camp goes its wild way until it is purified by a vigilance committee. It is all there: horses disguised with paint, the gun fanner who shooting from the hip can pierce his man's right biceps, the silver carbonates, Red Nell, the dish towel waved as a signal, the sacrifice, and the happy ending.

With these materials no one can quarrel, for with the exception of the sharp-shooting about which there wages endless debate, they are known truth. What does Mr. Irwin bring to the story to distinguish it from others of the same serial number? What quality such as Mr. Grey's power, Mr. Hough's historical pageantry, Mr. Rhodes's humor, or the poetry of Mr. Brand? A profuse social setting. The background is complete, a background not so much of nature or history as of manners. But he brings nothing to the story in comparison with what a writer of his skill should bring. There is some of that kind of writing which Stevenson laid like a gentle curse on the world, but the detail for some reason or other is all general and not particular. It is a hard book to remember, just as that composite American face which appears now and then and contains George Washington's nose and Mr. Hughes's whiskers is hard to remember. Since it is not a boy's book it is fair to be irritated at its general juvenile flavor.

As a milestone in the course of Western fiction it is an extremely interesting book, both for the fact that a skilled writer turning for the first time, as far as we know, to a long Western story, chooses to walk inside the young-old tradition, and for the fact that he must be among the last in the upper levels to do so. After all, painted horses can be interesting only once, and the latest writers in this rich field must rely on what the earliest did: the qualities of the artist and not the artisan. The town marshal must be interesting not only because he fans his gun, but because he is a human being. What Hangtown needs is a Jane Austen.

THE FIGHT ON THE STANDING STONE. By Francis Lynde. Scribners. \$2.

MY NAME IS LEGION. By Charles Morgan. Knopf. \$2.50 net.

MR. TASKER'S GODS. By T. F. Powys. Knopf. \$2.50 net.

THE EAMES-ERSKINE CASE. By C. Fielding. Knopf.

THE DIABOLIQUE. By Barbey d'Aurevilly. Knopf. \$3 net.

SOUTH WIND. By Norman Douglas (Modern Library). Boni & Liveright.

THE BLIND BOW-BOY. By Carl Van Vechten. Knopf.

YOUNG MRS. CRUSE. By Viola Meynell. Harcourt, Brace.

TRISTAN. By Armando Palacio Valdés. Four Seas.

INVISIBLE WOUNDS. By Frederick Palmer. Dodd, Mead. \$2.

HE WAS A MAN. By Rose Wilder Lane. Harpers. \$2.50.

THE CONFERENCE OF THE BIRDS. By R. P. Mason. Oxford University Press. \$2.

THE SKYROCKET. By Adela Rogers St. Johns. Cosmopolitan. \$2.

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A TRIANGLE. By Maurice Baring. Doubleday, Page. \$2 net.

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(Continued on next page)

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The New Books

Fiction

(Continued from preceding page)

MR. GODLY BESIDE HIMSELF. By Gerald Bullett. Boni & Liveright. \$2.50.
PROFESSOR. By Stanley Johnson. Harcourt, Brace. \$2 net.

History

AN OUTLINE OF JEWISH HISTORY. By S. M. DOUBNOW. New York: Max M. Maisel. 1925. 3 vols.

This authoritative and comprehensive survey of Jewish history by Simon Doubnow is now for the first time translated from the Russian into English. Written in a popular style Doubnow's "Outline of Jewish History" is at once reliable and impartial and embodies the results of the best scholarship on the subject. It is a first-class handy reference book for teachers and students and very useful to the general reader.

Doubnow sets forth in a clear and attractive manner the political, social, economic, and intellectual life of the Jewish people, as well as their philanthropic and educational endeavors in every land. The author endeavors to bring out in a clear manner the guiding principles of the Jewish spirit as evolved in the process of Jewish history. He presents all his matter in a fair, unbiased, and purely objective manner. Jewish history, it is well known, has shared the fate of the Jews, in that it has been treated either from an offensive or defensive point of view. In Doubnow's work the course of Jewish history has been traced without regard to any issue whatever, since the author aimed at the presentation of facts and their correct interpretation.

THE STORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO. By THOMAS WAKEFIELD GOODSPEED. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1925.

Dr. Goodspeed's outline of the truly marvelous story of the growth of the University of Chicago—from a project for a Baptist college with an equipment of a million to one of the world's greatest institutions, with over thirteen thousand students and an endowment of fifty-four million, all within a third of a century—comes out as part of the University's campaign for a doubling of that colossal endowment. No one is so well qualified as he to tell this story, for he was one of the progenitors of the institution, was secretary of the board of trustees from the start, and has been kept actively in harness to the present writing, in one capacity or another. This small book supplements and brings down to date his larger history published in 1916.

Nowhere in modern history is there a better demonstration of the truth of Emerson's remark that every great institution is the "lengthened shadow of a man" than in the case of the University of Chicago, for in a peculiar sense it is the creation of its first president, Dr. William R. Harper. From the first, his vision soared beyond present limitations: he planned the thing much as it stands today, and the tremendous driving force of his character not only started it but still, in a sense, keeps it going, for his two successors in office have followed the lines he laid down.

Dr. Goodspeed gives a brief but sufficient account of the ill-fated earlier University, and of the Baptist Theological Seminary, out of which the first idea of the present University grew. He tells, in some detail, of the securing of the endowment from Mr. Rockefeller, and of the hard times of the early years with the "struggle with the deficit." He sketches the rapid material development, the rise of new buildings and the proliferation of activities, from the opening year with its 742 students to the present. He notes that the University seems now to be entering upon what may be called its third phase of growth, the tendency of which may, perhaps, be suggested by the recent cancellation of the requirement of its charter that the president must be a Baptist.

RECENT AMERICAN HISTORY. By LESTER BURRELL SHIPPEE. Macmillan. 1924. \$3.25.

Many complex problems face the writer who undertakes to construct an orderly narrative of the last sixty years in the history of the United States. Professor Shippee in this volume has handled some of the more important of these problems with more than ordinary success. His account follows three main threads, politics, industrial development with the more obvious social repercussions that have followed it, and foreign affairs. The treatment is well balanced and quite without bias. The five

hundred and thirty-seven pages of text present, in the main, a compilation of facts carefully selected and set forth in a clear and orderly manner. Professor Shippee has prepared a thoroughly good textbook. Like most textbooks it is wanting in literary distinction and stimulating interpretations. One wishes that some chapters on intellectual and religious history could have been added and that the sections dealing with societal developments like the changes of recent decades in city and rural life could have been enlarged.

THE RISE OF LOUIS NAPOLEON. By F. A. SIMPSON. Longmans. \$5.

International

INTERNATIONAL TRADE FINANCE. By GEORGE W. EDWARDS. Holt. 1924. \$3.60.

Professor Edwards has attempted to give within the compass of one volume a survey of the balance of payments, foreign exchange, international banking, foreign trade finance, foreign credits, and foreign credit insurance, the discount markets, and the methods by which trade between the United States and countries with depreciated currency has been financed. It is obvious that all of these subjects cannot be treated in detail; there must be emphasis and the author cannot have hoped to satisfy all of his readers by his own choice of topics to be stressed. Nor can the reviewer expect that his views will accord with those of other readers who may hold firm beliefs about the relative importance of different phases of international trade finance. In such circumstances it seems best to suppress personal predilections so far as possible, and to portray the real contributions which Dr. Edwards has made to the study of foreign trade financing.

The writer is inclined to believe that the most significant contribution which has been made lies in the description of the international banking organization. Dr. Edwards analyzes the banking systems of this and other countries in so far as they affect foreign trade in any vital way, and traces the development of the international banking systems from the pre-war period to the present. The present condition of the American banks engaged in financing foreign trade and the causes of the post-war developments in branch banking are carefully outlined. In fact, the writer knows of no place where so adequate a description of the development and present condition of American foreign branch banking is given, and feels that these chapters alone would, if necessary, justify the existence of the book.

In the second part of the volume is found a careful study of foreign credits and a particularly welcome section on foreign credit insurance—topics which are omitted entirely or treated in a very sketchy fashion only in most texts on foreign exchange and trade finance. The reader who expects to learn the technique of foreign trade financing is, however, likely to be somewhat disappointed, as the chapters which deal specifically with this subject are, in our opinion, much too compressed to be helpful to the beginner. One who has already an understanding of the principles involved can read them with profit, and will find chapter ten—Documents of Collateral—unusually good.

The chief weakness of the book lies, perhaps, in the omissions in the treatment of foreign exchange. A clear and practical description of the exchange market is given, together with a satisfactory classification of the typical credit instruments used in foreign exchange, but there is little attention devoted to the rates of exchange, and the effects of the rates on the currents of trade. Nevertheless Dr. Edwards has produced a book which is distinctly worth while, and which should carry an appeal to the practical man of affairs, and to the college instructor.

THE COLLAPSE OF CENTRAL EUROPE. By KARL FRIEDRICH NOWAK. Dutton. 1924. \$8.

Dr. Nowak, if he were not known for an authority on Central Europe, would have made himself one by writing this book. He is unpartisan to a fault. The leaders of Germany and Austria-Hungary condemn themselves and are not condemned. Here and there the author interposes that a different policy might have had a happier result; but in the main his book is a brilliant, authoritative, and concise narrative of events in the two Empires from the days of the Brest-Litovsk peace conference to the beginning of the end—dissolution.

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