

Announcement

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New York

London

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

LANDSCAPE PAINTING FROM GIOTTO TO THE PRESENT DAY. By C. LEWIS HIND. Vol. II. From Constable to the Present Day. Scribners. 1924. \$8.50.

In tracing the complexities of landscape painting of the past century Mr. Hind finds the divisions by Schwab and tendencies, which served him well in the first volume, inadequate and adopts a rough chronological grouping by nations and birthdays. Chronology makes strange bedfellows; we have a chapter on Courbet, Harpignies, Bonvin, Fromentin, and Monticelli. With true journalistic knack, Mr. Hind bounds lightly between such incompatibles always alighting on his feet. Evidently the plan itself forbids anything like thorough and considerate criticism of tendencies. The author is avowedly shy of generalizations and responsive to the individual artist and single picture. What we have is not a history but a rapid running comment on some seven hundred modern landscape painters. The comment is always brisk and amusing, generally sensitive, and occasionally fine. We have to do with the hits and misses of a method essentially journalistic and should be grateful for a journalism that is rarely perfunctory and frequently enlightening.

As a guide post book every good thing may be said of this. Mr. Hind is diligent and fastidious in choosing his artists and adroit in catching their more interesting aspects, skilful in the selection of illustrations. For the first time in a general survey he includes a fair representation of American artists. And here it is odd that he omits that extraordinary handful of landscapes of the late '60s by La Farge, which anticipate so much of Mr. Hind's beloved Lepage. They are in private collections, and should be better known.

Towards everything that is grandstylish Mr. Hind is offish. Towards Delacroix, for example, he is positively condescending, an attitude it is hard to forgive. He fails to look at Watts's symbolism long enough to discover in their backgrounds some of the noblest abstract landscapes of all times. He inevitably undervalues the nobility of Harpignies and overvalues the cheerful gaudiness of Matisse. He accepts the modernists with a sort of blanket enthusiasm without discriminating the very various modernistic ideals. In short, as soon as he leaves the particular picture to treat an artist as a whole or a group of kindred artists, he has little to say and says it a bit at random. He is *par excellence* the gallery guide.

All this goes with his honestly expressed preference for the lyric (the sketchy) over the epic (the pondered picture). Every critic has a right to his prejudices, and Mr. Hind has the grace and the humor not to present his own as virtues. At the risk of unamiability we may observe that he who values only the lyric and cultivates it too persistently to the exclusion of the graver forms is rather likely to land—where Mr. Hind does in rarer lapses—in the merely chipper.

The book is of English make with an excellence in the half tone illustrations too rarely attained by the American cutmaker and printer.

Belles Lettres

WITH SILENT FRIENDS: ESSAYS IN EVERYDAY PHILOSOPHY. By RICHARD KING. Small, Maynard. 1925. \$2.

The title of this work is a trustworthy guide to its character, though not to its merit. This is a series of short papers, reprinted from the London *Tailer*, and written under a pseudonym. In this country they would probably have been syndicated, but they are immeasurably superior to the product of most of our home edition philosophers,—in sincerity and absence of cant, in practicality, and (though there is no parade of learning), in cultural background. Perhaps "Mr. King" would not have been syndicated in our dailies, perhaps his lack of interest in the current theologies, moralities, and prejudices is too outspoken, and the doubt is stronger when one reflects that these essays were written in wartime.

The book is not for the sophisticated, who might find it old stuff; for the merely sophisticated it betrays too much feeling, and they would sniff at its literary quality. It represents the reactions to war, the presence of disabled soldiers, practical politics, the disappointments of the marriage state, growing old, city and country life, etc., of a man impatient of dogma, valuing life and happiness, and saddened by the way both slip by us, applying to such problems his solid common-sense, humor, and not very skilful satire, and above all, that particular quality of imagination which gives insight into the small, daily, undramatic, avoidable, unhappinesses of ordinary persons. In so far as it appeals for a similar sympathy on the part of its readers it can hardly succeed, that quality being given, not achieved. Those who have it already, however, can find some illumination here, and in other respects these discourses profess no more than they accomplish.

A HISTORY OF FRENCH LITERATURE. By C. H. C. Wright. Oxford University Press. \$3.50
THE PEAL OF BELLS. By Robert Lynd. Appleton. \$2.

PATRIOTISM IS NOT ENOUGH. By John Haynes Holmes. Greenberg. \$2.

LITERATURE AND REVOLUTION. By Leon Trotsky. New York: International Publishers.

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF SAMUEL BUTLER. Edited by Henry Festing Jones and A. T. Bartholomew. Dutton.

THE STORY OF WILBUR THE HAT. By Hendrik Van Loon. Boni & Liveright. \$3.50.

WITH SILENT FRIENDS. By Richard King. Small, Maynard. \$2 net.

Biography

GRANDMOTHER TYLER'S BOOK. Edited by FREDERICK TUPPER and HELEN TYLER BROWN. Putnam's. 1925.

Lovers of quiet annals will find in these recollections of a New England woman whose memories covered the span of years from the Battle of Lexington to the end of the Civil War much to hold their interest. The daughter of parents whose birth and culture brought them into contact with the prominent men and women of the Revolutionary era, Mary Palmer Tyler saw move about her in her early days personalities whose names are written large in the

(Continued on next page)

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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.

Mary Palmer was but a few weeks old when her elders were stirred to profound excitement by the Battle of Concord, and her earliest recollections are of hearing at her mother's knee accounts of the family participation in that and succeeding events. Her Revolutionary canvas contains sketches of Warren, the Adamses, the Quincys, even of Washington, pictures of the French and the British, all of them slight but interesting. The main value of the book, however, lies not in these glimpses of important persons and events, but in its reflection of the life of a New England family, forced by ill fortune to a restricted opportunity but wearing the fine flower of its culture and its ideals bravely through misfortune. It is a sturdy, generous family life that is portrayed, one that enlists both sympathy and admiration for its participants. Mrs. Tyler's tale is told with simplicity and directness—even in her early girlhood her father commended these qualities in her style—and her narrative without any particularly arresting qualities is fluent and agreeable.

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

The Letters of Madame. Vol. II. Translated and edited by Gertrude Scott Stevenson. Appleton. \$5 net.

The Story of Irving Berlin. By Alexander Woolcott. Putnam.

Early Reminiscences. By S. Baring-Gould. Dutton. \$6.

The Autobiography of an Average Golfer. By O. B. Keeler. Greenberg.

Leon Trotsky. By Max Eastman. Greenberg. \$2.

Mr. Pepys. By J. R. Tanner. Harcourt, Brace.

The Reminiscences of a Fiddle Dealer. By David Laurie. Houghton Mifflin. \$2.50.

The Life of Thomas Hardy. By Ernest Brenneke, Jr. Greenberg. \$5.

Playing the Game. By Stanley Harris. Stokes. \$1.50 net.

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 praetorians, 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

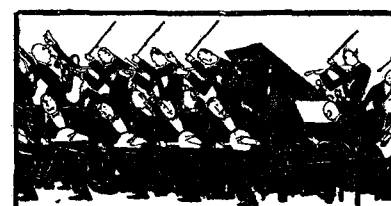
Spokesmen

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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