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Literature Abroad

A New Mann Novel

DER ZAUBERBERG. By THOMAS MANN. Berlin. S. Fischer. 1925.

Reviewed by A. W. G. RANDALL.

THOMAS MANN, it is said, has been engaged on his latest novel for the past ten years. It is true that since the beginning of the war, apart from a short story and one short novel about his favorite dog, he has published nothing substantial that was not political. We can now see that this diversion from his normal profession of novelist has not been without profit to the imaginative side of his work. In making his protest against the *Bildungsphilister*, against the easy, dilettante cosmopolitanism affected by some of his fellow-writers, in making his defence of the German national genius, in composing his satire on the *Zivilisationsliterat*—all these things may be found in his works "Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen", "Friedrich der Grosse und das Grosse Koalition" and the volume of essays, "Rede und Antwort"—it seems that Mann has been studying character, observing the newer social tendencies and types, bringing up to date, and on a larger canvas, the study of character he gave in his "Buddenbrooks" more than twenty years ago.

The plot of "Zauberberg", which is the least important thing about it, is soon told. A young man named Hans Castorp, son of a wealthy shipping family of Hamburg—that type Mann knows so well—arrives one day at Davos Platz at a sanatorium where his cousin, Joachim Ziemssen is undergoing a cure for lung trouble. The cousins are well contrasted—Hans the young dilettante, Joachim the earnest young studious type of German who one day descends the mountain to do his military service—it was all a few years before the outbreak of the Great War—and so aggravates his malady that he dies. Hans remains on the "Zauberberg", conversing with the various types who are thrown across his path—with a sensuous young Russian woman, Madame Chauchat, with whom he falls desperately, but inconclusively, in love, with Settembrini, a skeptical, anti-clerical Italian free-mason, with the Jew Naphta, Settembrini's antithesis, with his defence of absolutist philosophy and statecraft and his mystical belief in authority, with Dr. Behrens, director of the sanatorium and the embodiment of twentieth-century physical science, proud of its achievements, but not anxious to philosophize about them, with Dr. Krokowski, who might be any one of the Zurich school of psychoanalysis, with Mijnheer Peepkorn, a rich, comfortable, generous-hearted Dutch coffee-planter. The talks between all the characters in this remarkable gallery really make up the substance of Herr Mann's twelve-hundred or so pages. At the end Hans Castorp is in the trenches and we lose sight of him. Will his creator bring him through the fight? We are not told, but we hope so, for so penetrating a study in national types of before 1914 must surely be completed by a portraiture of young Germany, or young Italy, or young Europe as a whole, as it has emerged from the struggle.

A word must be said in conclusion about Mann's technical success. Twelve hundred

pages must seem a large number to sustain merely on dialogue and character expressed through conversation. But Mann has carried it off. For this not only his skill in writing dialogue and in drawing character, line by line with the conscientiousness of a Flaubert, must be given the credit. He chose the right design for his work and so won half the battle. By his device of the Zauberberg, a remote place, above the world, the *Flachland*, and yet in relation to it, he has contrived to convey the essence of pre-war European thought and action without being under the horrid necessity of busying himself with political and social actuality, with the stock-in-trade of newspaper correspondents. For all his realistic method, therefore, he has made his work far superior to any transcription of life; he has, in fact, largely succeeded in turning history into literature. It is a lesson in the technique of fiction that he has given us in his "Zauberberg". He is hardly likely to be deposed from the position he held even before he wrote it—of being the most considerable of living German novelists.

Foreign Notes

A VOLUME of interest to the student of art has recently appeared in Italy under the title "La Pittura Italiana del Seicento e del Settecento" (Rome: Bestetti & Tumminelli). It covers the period from the end of the sixteenth century to the middle of the eighteenth, thus supplying a survey of Italian painting over a stretch of years not generally chronicled with any fulness. The book is the joint product of U. Ojetti, L. Dami, and N. Tarchiani, contains an excellent historical analysis, copious biographical and bibliographical notes, and a large number of excellent plates.

Of Gerolamo Calvi's "I Manoscritti di Leonardo da Vinci—Dal Punto di Vista Cronologico Storico e Biografico," recently issued in Bologna by Zanichelli, the critic of the *London Times Literary Supplement*, says: "It is only doing justice to the results attained to say that the vast field of the Leonardo manuscripts has never before been surveyed with such skilled unity of purpose, and that the book is one which cannot be neglected by any future student of the subject. The study of it leads to the conviction that, despite the permanent value of the labors of Dr. Richter, Müller-Walde, and other outstanding figures, the final word in the interpretation of obscure points in the manuscripts must rest with the Italians."

A new book is to be published in the fall by David Garnett, author of "Lady into Fox" and "The Man in the Zoo." It is entitled "The Sailor's Return, or The History of William Targett, Mariner, and His Tulip."

André Maurois, author of "Ariel," is now writing a life of Disraeli.

"Mencken is right:"

says JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER

"it is beautifully written and saturated with a sharp, unforgettable emotion. It gathers up all his early promise surprisingly soon, and what he subsequently does must be of great interest and importance."

MR. HERGESHEIMER IS REFERRING TO

The Great Gatsby

By
Scott Fitzgerald

Here is an excellent summary of the merits of "The Great Gatsby," written by Herschel Brickell in the *New York Evening Post*:

"We had not read a half-dozen pages before we were saying: 'Why, the man's perfectly at his ease in a serious piece of writing. His style fairly scintillates, and with a genuine brilliance; he writes surely and soundly.' The rest of the book confirmed the impression. . . . A social study . . . important in its implications. . . . In addition to demonstrating an admirable mastery of his medium both in style and construction, he has written a story that at its best is very, very good. . . . Mr. Fitzgerald manipulates his people and his situations with a master hand. . . . The handling is excellent, and one cannot withhold admiration from the creation of atmosphere which Mr. Fitzgerald does so well, nor from his blending of a cold and aloof irony with a sort of compassion for every one involved in the curious tangle. . . . Mr. Fitzgerald's prose is distinguished, nothing short of it. It has color, richness, an abundance of imagery, and a fine sense of the picturesque. . . . With it, Mr. Fitzgerald . . . enters into the group of American writers who are producing the best serious fiction. On the basis of this book alone Mr. Fitzgerald gives about as much promise as any young writer we have, and that is a thoughtful opinion. . . . If you begin it you'll go straight through to the end, and you will be conscious that you have read an excellent piece of writing. Mr. Fitzgerald will bear watching."

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The Reader in London

By W. G. TINCKOM-FERNANDEZ

WE may be known as a newspaper and library ridden nation, but it takes a prolonged residence abroad for the American reader and literary worker to appreciate these home privileges. It is perhaps too easy for us to obtain the books we want to read and not buy. The nearest branch Public Library may not be a large one, but the system of coordination whereby a branch may borrow a book for one of its readers from another branch in some distant part of the city not only insures rapid service for the latest books, but also enables the urban system to acquire books that no single or independent library can afford to purchase.

When you come to London you see books everywhere, on stalls in the streets, in shops, and you learn of the great British Museum. You find a library in each borough and in the suburbs, now and then a Carnegie foundation, and you think to while away many a rainy day sitting by the fire with a borrowed book. But try it. You will find a well-thumbed collection in each of the borough public libraries of London, but a woefully limited and antiquated collection. It is useless to depend on any public library for keeping abreast of the enormous output of the London publishers. There is no interlocking system between the libraries of the city or its suburbs. You then realize why the British support so many subscription libraries. You make haste to join Mudie's the oldest of this type, or the Times Book Club, or the famous London Library founded in 1840, when public libraries were unknown. The London Library is a private organization, and came into existence of sheer necessity.

Carlyle had been impressed with the fact that Dumfries supported a jail but no library, and while reading for his study of "Cromwell" Carlyle found London almost as difficult as Dumfries. He gathered a number of literary workers together at the Freemason's Tavern in 1840, and the subscription London Library came into existence. But it is no place for the sojourner. He must pay \$15 admission fee, and another \$15 annual subscription. If he wants more than one book he must pay an additional \$5 for the privilege of taking up to five volumes out, and these may not be new works. In order to join he must be recommended by a member, and not a householder as in the case of the Public Libraries. It is not easy for a sojourner to find a member in the big city of London.

And so he turns to Mudie's or the Times Book Club, which are less exacting, and a deposit together with a reasonable fee for three or six months or a year entitles him to membership. Books may be kept as long as you want, though a quarter is demanded for every extra volume on a minimum membership. The attraction of this type of library is that there is a second-hand department, and the latest books, after they have served time in the circulation department, are sold at reduced prices. A member may put his name down for a new book and he has first chance at purchasing. These libraries certainly foster the habit of buying books.

This fact impressed me with the difference between the average American and British reader. Both are omnivorous in their demands and catholic in their tastes. But whether from the reason of inadequate public library service or from the fact that he has a more permanent home in which to accumulate books, I think the Londoner is a far more consistent reader and purchaser of new and second-hand books than the New Yorker. He travels longer distances to and from his job, and being philosophic and less anxious about getting somewhere in a hurry, whether in London or in the country, you will find him relapse into a book he seems always to carry in his pocket. He seems to carry a book as he carries an umbrella—always prepared for British eventualities. You can't expect him to bring one to a football match, but, cricket being less strenuous than baseball, you will find him reading at a cricket match and taking a simultaneous interest in that leisurely game. He carries books to the theatres to read between acts and to concerts. The bicycle seems to have a perennial lease of life, and nearly every man, woman or adolescent in London takes his wheel, his lunch, and a book to the big parks or the country outside London. They read at lunch and at tea, on bus tops and in railway carriages, more books than magazines.

What the Londoner reads may be an important question, but one that would defy a census taker. Of course, in city and

country trains and on busses, in lunch and tea rooms, one may furtively satisfy one's curiosity. But while you will find the stenographers and clerks, male and female, ardent supporters of the "Sheik" school, yet there are many surprises. The Brontës and George Eliot, Dickens, Pepy's "Diary," Boswell, Lamb and the newest "highbrow" books have also come under my sideview. I am forced to remark once more at the general scarcity of magazine readers. Perhaps the British book trade makes these cheap, handy little pocket editions for just this class of reader. The price averages 50 cents, and these readers appear to own and not to borrow their books.

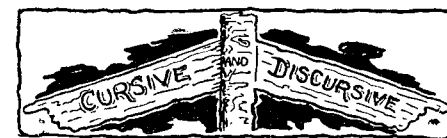
One naturally leaves the specialist for the last, and then one begins with the venerable and august British Museum. You will find the same literary types in its big reading room, perhaps more true to type or to our notion of caricature. There is the successful as well as the poverty-stricken reader and researcher. I recall that poor Gissing used the Museum lavatory for his daily ablutions. Let us say that the War has obliterated this extreme type. It is rarely met in the Museum today. But what a cosmopolitan collection! Americans writing theses for a doctorate, Germans collating, and all the races of Europe either in quest of the British Constitution or staving off homesickness. And how British to see them all file out for that very necessary meal called 'Tea! Next to the British Museum there is the Guildhall Library for antiquarians and historians, the most fascinating collection on this fascinating old city.

But the American is sorely tried at the British Museum. There is no card catalogue, though the various Public Libraries have installed the system. There is an Author's and a Subject index. Each consists of cuttings from publishers' catalogues, or a similar source, pasted into large leather-bound scrap-books. If you are successful in finding what you want after a week's steady practice, you write on a printed slip all the particulars, place it in one of two boxes at the desk, and then, leaving some momento to save your seat, you go out into the large yard and listen to the starlings that take refuge on the classic porch.

Or you walk to the street, past the policeman and porter to light a pipe or cigarette, for you may not smoke anywhere on the precincts outside the building. Or, if you aren't used to the drizzle that perpetually falls in London you wander through the various Museum collections that are world-famous. I have found classical archaeology too cold to contemplate on a rainy day and take refuge among the mummies, where the atmosphere, at least, suggests dryness and warmth. In any event it is quite useless to return to your seat within the half-hour, for your books will not be there.

I defy anyone to find exactly what he wants in the British Museum. You are quite certain that every book ever published is there, because a law of copyright compels every publisher to deposit copies. But the catalogue of Subject or Author will not help you. And woe betide you if you have forgotten the author! You will wade through countless tomes, catalogues, and publisher's announcements, for they seem to regard the long-suffering publisher as a public utility, and you are likely to be baffled. Nor can you expect the polite and obliging assistants to be mind-readers. Why not card indexes? My dear fellow, it would be jolly well impossible with all the books they have. Why haven't they made a start? It's not done and never will be done.

Then there is a Magazine Room where every periodical in the world is received. But you wouldn't know it. It's a dead secret. And when you make out a slip for a certain magazine, sitting at a desk and waiting for the attendant to secrete it from the hidden repositories, you will perhaps prefer to subscribe for it. And yet, what would you? There is only one British Museum. After you have inducted yourself into its mysteries you will learn that it cannot change. Where else will you hope to get that out-of-print volume? But you'll get it if you persevere, and for that you will be grateful. And if you're writing a book or a thesis you will come over on a sabbatical and drink strong tea with bacon and eggs for breakfast in some damp Bloomsbury boarding house, and wear out several pairs of rubbers and lose as many umbrellas, and get acquainted with every policeman in twisty London, so as to spend your working hours in the British Museum.



BY THE PHOENECIAN

PERIODICALLY we feel called upon to comment on certain periodicals, not the long-established ones, but new ventures of one kind and another that always seem to gravitate to our desk. * * * Here before us, for instance, is the *Year Book of the N. Y. Craftsman's Group* published at Bath, New York. Only the names of George Jay Smith, Faith Van Valkenburgh Vilas, and Clement Wood are familiar to us in the list of contents. The poetry does not linger long in our mind. * * * Here is Mr. Humphrey Milford's *The Periodical*, made up of excerpts from the books of the Oxford Press, with delightful illustrations from the same,—publicity *de luxe!* Here, shouldering it aside, is the new magazine of poetry and youth, *Pan*, published monthly at Notre Dame, Indiana, a periodical that Vachel Lindsay avers "must fight like a hell-cat and love beauty like a saint," a pronouncement they have taken for their motto. They list on their advisory board Edwin Markham, Don Marquis, Conrad Aiken, Witter Bynner, Lindsay, Neihardt, Sandburg, Ina Coolbrith, Bodenheim, and Sterling. *Pan's* first shrilling on the reeds strikes us as a trifle thin. It certainly engenders no panic. * * * And here's *The Double Dealer*, an old friend; and here's *The Jewish Life*, a new one, the official organ of Jewish Science, with ads in the back of the Bowknot Evening Gown, Djer-Kiss, and Rollo the great fat reducer. Inside we have articles on "The Creative Mind" and "Walking With God." It's a truly modern periodical! * * * More interesting is *Leonardo*, the annual magazine of the Leonardo Da Vinci Art School, edited by Onorio Ruotolo and Francesca Vinci Roman. It is a richly printed and illustrated portfolio, featuring many English and Italian contributors. Gabriele d'Annunzio, Pascal D'Angelo, Konrad Bercowicz, Charles Dana Gibson, John Macy, Harry Kemp, Boardman Robinson, Art Young, many Italian artists and writers, are all given space in these pages, with expensive reproductions of paintings, drawings and sculpture. * * * And then here is the latest literary venture from Yale, *Linonia*, published by Yale College undergraduates, chiefly R. J. Ullman and J. M. Frankland. Its format is excellent, its contributions rather interesting. We wish it success! * * * Finally, of course, we have Edwin Valentine Mitchell's always charming *Book Notes* which we have often mentioned in these columns. We always like to crib from his "Grub Street Notes." * * * From them we politely lift the information that Barry Benefield, publicity standby of The Century Company, has written a novel they are going to publish. We fling our cap in the air, as we have always maintained that Barry was one of the greatest unappreciated American short story writers. * * * And André Maurois is writing a book on *Disraeli*,—and it is rumored that Suzanne Lenglen, the Terpsichore of Tennis, has written a novel. * * * Thank you, Edwin Valentine! * * * Virginia Woolf dedicates to Lytton Strachey her latest volume, "The Common Reader." It is not fiction but a collection of essays. The title is taken from Samuel Johnson, who "rejoiced to concur" with the common reader. The papers rove over the *Pastons* and *Chaucer*, around the Elizabethan lumber room, ramble round Evelyn, skirting Montaigne and the *Duchess of Newcastle*, touch upon Defoe and Addison, penetrate certain obscure literary lives, and include Jane Austen, "Jane Eyre," George Eliot, Miss Mitford, Joseph Conrad, and others, with several excursions into discussion of modern fiction and the modern essay. * * * We have just pecked at Mrs. Woolf's book, but the remarks we caught up at random, on Jane Austen, on Joseph Conrad, on James Joyce, we felt so utterly right, that we are longing to give the volume our full attention. * * * Witter Bynner has instituted a new poetry prize, an annual award to be known as the "Witter Bynner Scholastic Poetry Competition." It will be open to all high school students, junior and senior, in the United States. It will be awarded through *The Scholastic*, a national high school magazine published semi-monthly at Pittsburgh. Several months ago this magazine received such an overwhelming response to an invitation issued for prize poems, stories, essays, etc., to be published in a specially student-written number, that Bynner, as one of the poetry judges, conceived his special prize. * * *