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The New Books

(Continued from preceding page)

Foreign

feels like rubbing his hands in glee to find that in a foreign mirror nature is *not* here—in "pictured too severely true." The index is a good one.

BIJ ONS IN NOORD HOLLAND. By H. J. HEIJNES. Amsterdam: Waten Have.

Numerous are the sketches of Dutch life more or less sympathetic—the less sympathetic tending to caricature—but to those who love to see how the Dutch really live and enjoy life, this is the book. It abounds with wit, for the author has a keen sense of both bright speech and of humor and enjoys picturing with amusement and sympathy his own people in their sunny and dark days, good and hard times. In North Holland, the animals and the human beings seem very close to each other in both understanding and sympathy and "Bartje and I" appear to have a steadily good time together. One thing is certain, that outwardly the Dutch change with the times, while inwardly human nature in either South or North Holland remains as of old.

Government

THE "MACHINE" ABOLISHED. By CHARLES C. P. CLARK. Putnams. 1925. \$1.50.

The same vintage of political wrath that brought forth Henry George and Edward Bellamy yielded another work of speculative civics that in its time likewise made some stir. It is interesting to find that Dr. Clark's scheme of electoral reform possesses enough vitality, after a quarter-century of quiescence, to strike out with something of the force of a new idea. Our party system, and the electoral methods out of which it rises, have not undergone any such happy transfiguration as would rob the Clark plan of its relevancy. The new edition of "The Machine Abolished" fits well enough into a time when men still vote, and women as well, for persons about whom they have no certain knowledge, hand picked by anonymous politicians.

No one, in his capacity of citizen and voter, under the Clark plan, would elect a President, Legislator, Governor, Judge or even Mayor. Neighborhood groups of citizens would meet once every three years, and each choose one man, to do their electing for them. The resulting delegates would elect only in cases where they in turn could act in bodies of not over two hundred or so. In the election of a President, four successive step-ups, as the radio parlance has it, would intervene between the individual citizen and the Nation's choice. As long as a select few are to pick those destined to govern us, the people, according to Dr. Clark, may as well have a hand, if only an indirect one, in the selection of these few. Whatever its shortcomings, the plan offers the shortest conceivable ballot.

NEW ASPECTS OF POLITICS. By Charles E. Merriam. University of Chicago Press. \$2.50.
THE QUEBEC ACT. By R. Coupland. Oxford University Press.

History

GREEK SOCIAL LIFE. By F. A. Wright. Dutton. \$2.

CORRESPONDENCE OF JOHN ADAMS AND THOMAS JEFFERSON, 1812-1826. Selected by Paul Wiltach. Bobbs-Merrill. \$2.75.

THE TAMING OF THE FRONTIER. Edited by Duncan Aikman. Minton, Balch. \$3.

International

THE THRESHOLD OF THE PACIFIC. By C. E. Fox. New York. Alfred A. Knopf. 1925. \$6.

"The Threshold of the Pacific" is a particularly pointed illustration of the impression which the late Dr. Rivers made upon his associates. This valuable collection of ethnographical data from the island of San Cristoval, in the Solomons, is treated reverently, with due acknowledgment to the "master." Dr. Rivers induced the author to enter the field of ethnographical research, and every effort is made to stress the results which conform to Dr. Rivers's brilliant and sketchy theories. Contrary opinions are piously regretted in footnotes. This attitude and a resounding

preface by Elliot Smith have done their part in marring the usefulness of the book.

Dr. Fox already possessed a wide knowledge of Oceanic languages: this knowledge he used loosely for general comparative purposes. He approached the analysis of the San Cristoval native culture with a linguistic bias and two theories to establish, one methodological, the other historical. He was committed to the use of mythology and religious practices as they appeared associated with various forms of social organization as the best method of reconstructing the history of primitive culture: Rivers's use had sanctified this method. In addition there was the whole Diffusionist position to bolster up; the traces of early Egyptian culture with its differentia of mummification, serpent worship, sun cult, etc., must be distinguished in the complex San Cristoval culture, a priori assumed to be the product of several distinct migrations. Approaching his material from this standpoint, Dr. Fox was doomed to produce a volume which was neither pure theory nor pure description. Most fortunately, he has handled the two aspects separately, though often on the same page. His interpretations have not skewed the actual presentation of the facts—they are simply tacked on often superfluously. But the choice of material reflects a preliminary bias, and it is here that the work has suffered. For example, art is discussed only as it throws light on a sun cult, or a moon cult, or the status of a particular clan. And the general account of the religious belief and practices is falsified by the continual insistence upon stratification. By separating a complex system of beliefs, often containing anachronistic and contradictory elements, into a series of hypothetical and coherent systems identified with separate migrations, he has tremendously oversimplified the picture of the culture.

But owing to the amount of painstaking labor which Dr. Fox has expended, and to the meticulous honesty which prevents him from introducing any speculations without expressly labelling them as such, "The Threshold of the Pacific" remains a valuable collection of accurate ethnographical information, despite the defects inherent in a scientific work written in the defense of a peculiar orthodoxy.

NOW AND FOREVER. By SAMUEL ROTH. McBride. 1925. \$1.75.

Mr. Samuel Roth has an ardent nature. He is endowed with the poetic gift and is capable of passionate thinking. In this little book he has become confused. The significance of being a Jew has tremendously affected his mode of thinking. Jewish history and his own Jewish experience have sent him groping after the concealed constituents of Jewish character. The task apparently has warped his point of view on the subject. His subconscious mind has become obsessed with the intricacies of the Jewish problem, and after brooding over them for many years, sentimental years of adolescence and young manhood, he emitted his conclusions in a gush of hot opinion and scalding prejudice. "Now and Forever" thus appears a verbal torrent of formless thought expressed with fanatic zeal and courageous ignorance.

The book is written in the form of a dialogue between Mr. Israel Zangwill and the author, carried on in the latter's subconscious mind while attending a tea at the Zangwills and observing closely the writer of "The Children of the Ghetto." Mr. Roth is very hostile to Zangwill, sometimes even abusive. He blames the founder of the Jewish Territorial Organization to have assumed the rôle of the legendary Pharoah who has finally caught up with the Jews and now aspires to lead them—not into Palestine but into lands of nowhere. He takes Zangwill by the coat collar and drags him through the whole of Jewish history; he pauses long enough to impress upon his imaginary victim his peculiar though sometimes ingenious explanation of the why and wherefore of Jewish character, anti-semitism, God, Jesus, Herzl, and other similar subjects. He excoriates the reformed rabbi, the antisemite, the Zionists even.

Nevertheless the book is very stimulating to anyone interested in Jewish affairs. The author's very prejudices present the reader with a point of view that is original if not sound; and they are expressed in a vigorous and glittering flow of words. One feels sorry that his laudable earnestness and brilliancy are used to express his ideas and notions on the Jewish problem

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THE SATURDAY REVIEW
OF LITERATURE

without the clarifying severity of self-criticism. Mr. Zangwill, with much good grace, contributes a lengthy preface in which he defends his now defunct Jewish Territorial Organization. His views of the Jewish problem, more salutary and more appealing, also emerge from the emotions.

WHITHER ENGLAND? By Leon Trotsky. International. \$1.75.
SOCIAL CLASSES IN POST-WAR EUROPE. By Lothrop Stoddard. Scribners. \$2.

Juvenile

THE BOYS' LIFE OF GENERAL GRANT. By WILLIAM O. STEVENS. Harpers. 1925. \$1.75.

Grant's life is one to interest and inspire American youth, and to help satisfy the curiosity which all normal boys feel about the Civil War campaigns. Mr. Stevens has written an accurate, well-colored biography, not too elementary, of which some 200 pages—there are fewer than 350 altogether—are devoted to the war. There is a plenitude of anecdote, selected to throw into relief Grant's traits of taciturnity, dogged determination, hard sense, and honesty. Horace Porter's "Campaigning With Grant" has been one of the principal sources used. The author glances only briefly at Grant's career as President, and in his interpretation of certain episodes of these eight years is unduly favorable to his hero. But he does not gloss over the story of the Grant & Ward failure, which is dramatic in the extreme, and which has some lessons highly desirable for boys. The quiet heroism of Grant's last days is well described, and Mr. Stevens does not forget to note that Generals Joseph Johnston and Simon Buckner walked behind the coffin in New York city. His book is a worthy addition to a series which already included Hermann Hagedorn's "Boys' Life of Theodore Roosevelt" and "Mark Twain."

Miscellaneous

FIRST AID TO THE OPERA GOER. By MARY FITCH WATKINS. Stokes. 1925. \$3.

WHAT MUSIC DOES TO US. By MILO E. BENEDICT. Small, Maynard. 1925. \$1.50.

Miss Watkins is one of those rare persons who can attend a performance of opera in company with a sense of humor. Most of us feel too keenly the fearful incongruity in the puerile and imbecile librettos panoplied, as they are, with all the splendor of fine scenery, beautiful voices, and magnificent orchestras. Instead of ignoring the silly stories, Mary Watkins accepts them lightheartedly, pokes fun at them, retells them with delicate irony, and proceeds at once to sufficient elucidation of the whole matter of story and music. Hers is one of the best books of opera stories anywhere because it can be read on its own account. It is a witty and charming collection of stories, which, were they not so familiar, we should hardly recognize as the silly old tales of opera. It is an excellent introduction for those who don't happen to know opera very well, and a pleasant bit of reading for those who wish to remind themselves of dimly remembered plots.

"What Music Does To Us" is another kind of book. Mr. Benedict might justly have named it "A Revaluation of Musical Values." He is distinctly iconoclastic. Lately, we have been hearing a good deal about the powers of music to solve our problems, cure our ills, and secure world peace. Apparently, according to some of these enthusiasts, all that is necessary is to have the population assemble at some inconvenient hour on the village green, or in the city parks and sing together a few old songs—the millennium will then come walking quietly over the hill. Mr. Benedict doesn't seem to believe this. Indeed, he points out some decided disadvantages in a too slavish yielding to the increasing exactions of this most exacting art. Since he is a teacher, and one well seasoned with experience, (he is spoken of as one of the later pupils of Liszt) he doubtless speaks from observation. He rightly pleads for a more balanced relationship between the general business of life and the study of music.

The little book touches some important questions concerning musical education and the nature and effects of music. It is an intelligent and clever book that in itself disproves much of its author's case against the narrowness and general incapacity of musicians. In his case, at

least the study and practice of music has not prevented him, judging by his thinking and writing, from becoming an intelligent and delightful human being.

Philosophy

STUDIES IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF DAVID HUME. By CHARLES W. HENDL, JR. Princeton University Press. 1925. \$4 net.

Professor Hendl's book, although it is needlessly long, more than justifies itself because of the flood of new light it sheds upon an acute critical genius whose real contribution to "the stock of knowledge that must pass to future generations" has been hitherto overlooked or misinterpreted. And it is an eminently readable book, too, happily almost free from the turgidity and apparently deliberate foggyiness that mar the writings of too many professional philosophers.

The author takes the reader pleasantly through the chief events of Hume's quiet life, doing a real service in pointing out clearly the evolution of the precocious young Scotsman's ideas, listing the ancient and contemporary thinkers who formed his views, and showing how Epicurean, Stoic, and Academic teaching prepared him for his assimilation of the doctrines of Montaigne, Locke, Bayle, and particularly of Hobbes and Malebranche, Bishop Butler and Berkeley. Very acute is his analysis of Hume's progress to the point where he asked the pregnant question, "Why is a cause always necessary?"—a query that was to prove so embarrassing to philosophers, especially to Kant, who devoted nine years of study to formulating a reply.

But the meat of this book is in the chapters on Hume's theory of causation, and the rôle played by the imagination. Here is a really new view of Hume. No one interested in the proper evaluation of Hume's philosophy can afford to neglect this careful and revealing study; and it will be surprising if most competent readers do not find that the book will force them to revise their previous estimates in large measure, and to accord to the great Scotch thinker a far higher place as an original discoverer in the realm of thought than he has hitherto been granted.

Poetry

THE OXFORD BOOK OF RUSSIAN VERSE. Chosen by the HON. MAURICE BARING. Oxford University Press. 1925.

The purpose of the present anthology is not quite clear. If it is a compendium for students of Russian, then it will be found to be beyond their reach, all the more since it has no notes bearing on the syntax and peculiarities of Russian poetic style. To lovers and connoisseurs of Russian it has nothing to offer. Full of lacunæ, it fails to mention poets that, for the last fifteen years, have become the inalienable property of Russian culture. Nor are they all moderns. The poet Yakubovich, known in Russia as P. Y., poet, martyr, prisoner, exile, who died some thirty years ago, and was responsible for the remarkable translation of Baudelaire's "Fleurs du Mal," has found no favor with the compiler. And where is Mayakovsky?

Mr. Baring does say in the Introduction that the anthology does not pretend to deal with the post-revolutionary poetry. Yet he records Blok's death (1921). All those omitted have been active in Russian *belles-lettres* for the last fifteen years. In vain do we look for the name of Zinaida Gippius, wife of Merezhkovski, a poet of great importance. And Igor Severyanin, the leader of imaginalists. Kuzmina, poet of popularity and importance. Where is Vyacheslav Ivanov, the poet, pagan, and great stylist? Why have we no trace of Belyi, author of St. Petersburg, and spiritual brother of Blok? And why is that unforgettable poem of Brusov, Mason, missing? There is no criterion discernible in the selection of poets worthy of inclusion in the anthology.

Travel

TRAILING THE SUN ROUND THE EARTH. By HALBERT K. HITCHCOCK. Putnam. 1925. \$2.50.

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