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The New Books

Belles Lettres

THE LIFE OF JOHN JOHNSON. By JOHN JOHNSON. Houghton Mifflin, 1925.

Twenty years of a life of years is to be a philosopher of life. Every one of a score of poems draws up a "silence." Mr. Drinkwater, poet and dramatist, now submits his volume of poetic criticism.

The first of its three parts, headed "Theory," certainly fulfils the author's prefatory admission of inconsistency for in one embrace we find doctrine from Aristotle and from Croce. The Ancient Masters, of the second part, receive but a meagre offering of genuine criticism. The last section, which deals with poets contemporary or recent, is quickened, we suspect, by a livelier personal interest, but Mr. Drinkwater does not allow friendly enthusiasm to play traitor to his critical sense. He may devote over thirty pages to the minor poet William Cory and barely three to A. E. Housman and still he knows their places. Occasionally he throws off a well modeled epigram or a finely drawn definition, fair fruit of an excellent literary craftsmanship. Of three or four poets, particularly Alice Meynell and Edwin Arlington Robinson, he writes acutely and knowingly.

Seldom, however, does Mr. Drinkwater stimulate any searching reflection throughout his book. He rarely fathoms his subject. At times he indulges in a little critical splashing but he prefers the milder pleasure of dabbles in literary causerie. The fault is common with poet-critics; only the exception, as with Goethe, is at once a good creator and a good critic. Most poets naturally enough have a much higher regard for their poetry than for criticism and when they turn to critical work in a moment of recreation they do not accept the responsibility of a serious critic. They fail usually to "see life steadily and see it whole," through the medium of criticism, though they may have a fine taste and a stable judgment.

Unlike the poet, the critic to be interesting must either be profound or sensational. Mr. Drinkwater is in this book neither.

FALSE PROPHETS. By JAMES M. GILLIS. Macmillan, 1925. \$2.

Twelve of the fourteen essays of this volume deal with Shaw, Wells, Freud, Doyle, Nietzsche, Haeckel, Twain, and France, considering their literary productions from the narrow but well-defined viewpoint of Catholic doctrine. G. B. S., instead of being allowed his interpretation of the universe as a concomitant of rational observation, is pilloried for his "pessimism." Mark Twain's face to face scrutiny of this world is styled "the depths of dependency." Though few literary readers or thoughtful adults will agree with the premises and conclusions of this essayist, all of them will be interested in the apparent fairness of his considerations and at times (mainly upon topics not entirely pertinent to his lines of development) stimulated by the rightness of his views, as for instance, in his resumé of the spiritualistic extravagances of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The style of the volume varies from excellent informative exposition to the most obvious journalese. The last two essays are "The Revival of Paganism," and "Back to Christ—or Chaos," titles which plainly enough indicate the dogmatic essence of the articles.

JOHNSON THE ESSAYIST: HIS OPINIONS ON MEN, MORALS, AND MANNERS. By O. F. CHRISTIE. Doran, 1925.

This is another of the numerous books provoked by converse with the sturdy genius of the Great Lexicographer. For he was not only the maker of books himself, but for a century and a half he has been the cause of book-making in others—today more than ever. To revel in Johnson or Boswell is, sooner or later, to reach involuntarily for one's pen.

The present instance is chiefly a compilation of extracts from the *Rambler*, the *Adventurer*, and the *Idler*, elaborately classified, to show Johnson's opinions on all sorts of things, and accompanied with the editor's comment and marginal quotations from the "Life." The prefatory chapter on Johnson's Style and Mannerisms contains little that is not obvious.

Dipping and skimming among these ex-

cerpts will amuse the Johnsonian, though he will gain a better notion of Johnson's performance as an essayist by considering the essays unutilized, as he may conveniently do in Dr. Hill's charming anthology.

The editor aims "to lure the Boswellian-Johnsonians . . . into new paths of enjoyment, and to convince them that they may find in the Essays wit and wisdom equal to the wit and wisdom they have tasted in Johnson's familiar conversation." But even distilled into two hundred pages this earlier wit and wisdom only hints here and there the pungent vigor of the conversation and the "Lives of the Poets."

Johnson said that no one but a blockhead would write except for money and he was no blockhead. Forced to turn out these essays at short and regular intervals, he inevitably wrote many, perhaps most of them, "doggedly." They are largely excellent specimens of uninspired journalism, produced while Johnson still labored in want and bitterness of heart. For these very reasons they will bear less oracular weight than Mr. Christie, on the whole, is prone to give them.

IDIOT MAN. By Charles Rickett. Brentanos. \$2.
CONTEMPORARY STUDIES. By Charles Baudouin. Dutton. \$5.

THE MODERN IBSEN. By Herman Weigand. Holt. \$3.

WANDERINGS AND EXCURSION. By J. Ramsay MacDonald. Bobbs-Merrill. \$3.

THE WRITERS OF GREECE. By Gilbert Norwood. Oxford University Press. \$1 net.

ROBERT BROWNING: HUMANIST. By A. Compston Rickett. Dial Press. \$1.50.

ESSAYISTS PAST AND PRESENT. By J. B. Priestley. Dial Press. \$1.50.

THE STORY OF MAN'S WORK. By William R. Hayward and Gerald W. Johnson. Minton, Balch. \$3.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE POET SHELLEY. By Edward Carpenter and George Burnfield. Dutton. \$2.

HILLS AND THE SEA. By Hilaire Belloc. London: Methuen.

STILL MORE PREJUDICE. By A. B. Walkley. Knopf. \$2.75 net.

LIFE'S LITTLE PITFALLS. By A. Maude Royden. Putnam. \$1.25.

THEODORE DREISER. By Burton Rascoe. McBride. \$1 net.

VIRGINITY PUEBESQUE. (Longman's Library). By Robert Louis Stevenson. Dutton. 80 cents.

AMERICAN POETRY AND PROSE. Edited by Norman Foerster. Houghton Mifflin. \$4.

Biography

THE QUEEN OF COOKS—AND SOME KINGS (The Story of Rosa Lewis). Recorded by MARY LAWTON. Boni & Liveright, 1925. \$3.

The complete picture of one woman's life lies in the pages of this book. It is told in her own words, with directness, naiveté, and mature wisdom. It must have taken skillful editing on Miss Lawton's part to keep the narrative so fresh and simple. For it is more than mere "reminiscences" of high points in Rosa Lewis's life—it is a vital document, recording in detail the growth of a little girl of mediocre parentage from the position of scullery-maid to the unique honor of being recognized as the foremost cook in England. How did Rosa Lewis accomplish this rise? In the first place by having vigorous self-confidence and will-power. "I knew that I could do anything I wished to do," she said. Also, "I did everything myself, then I knew it would be all right."

Rosa Lewis could not, no matter what she did, have remained obscure. . . . Her first ambition was to be a teacher. Lacking the opportunity to train herself for that, and impatient of being a dependent at home, she took the first job that she could get—scullery-maid in the home of the Comte de Paris, a political expatriate living in England.

Her conscientious talent for cooking was quickly recognized. She began to do private catering, going herself to houses where a dinner was to be served, planning the menu and preparing every dish with her own hands. Soon she became indispensable on occasions when royalty was to be entertained—because no one else knew so well what the king or the prince or Lord X liked to eat and how it should be cooked. Her vogue grew until she had a staff working under her. Still she did the important things herself. She would do anything, even to scrubbing the doorstep at the last minute, if there were danger of the royal (Continued on next page)

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Lady Susan, by Jane Austen. Written about 1805. First published in 1871. Now reprinted from the manuscript. Net, \$2.50. Limited edition printed on hand-made paper. Net, \$7.00.

This collection of letters, written on paper bearing the watermark 1805, was preserved in Miss Austen's family, and in 1871 it was published by Mr. J. E. Austen Leigh in the second edition of his *Memoir of his Aunt*. It is now reprinted from the autograph in the possession of the Earl of Rosebery; and a correct and unmodernized text is for the first time given to the public. Both editions are uniform with *Sanditon*, of which the large-paper edition is exhausted and the ordinary edition went to a second impression within a fortnight.

Life in Mediaeval France, by Joan Evans. Net, \$5.25.

Miss Evans describes the background of the mediaeval history of France—likening history to a great tapestry.

Travel in England in the Seventeenth Century, by Joan Parkes. Net, \$7.00.

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The New Books Biography

(Continued from preceding page)

visitor's coming upon a dirty door-step. Eventually she became the proprietor of a hotel, the Cavendish, in Jermyn Street, London. There she rose to her greatest fame, for her hotel was the center of London's conservative social life.

But this was all before the World War. The war was a cataclysm to Rosa Lewis; not only because it took by death many of her dear friends, but because it changed, before her eyes, the whole atmosphere of civilization. The war commercialized everything—especially service. She still has the Cavendish hotel, but her spirit is broken by what seems to her the utter callousness of this modern age. She laments the old days when democracy was unthinkable.

Fiction

SEIBERT OF THE ISLAND. By GORDON YOUNG. Doran. 1925. \$2.

From its setting, and from a few of its chief character-types, one might almost believe that Jack London had written this story, except that Mr. London would have molded the same material into a much more powerful and convincing tale. The action, for the most part, takes place on a small island of the South Seas, where illicit love, intrigue, piracy, and romance combine to furnish the reader a maximum number of thrills. The dominant figure, Adolph Seibert, a successful planter of German extraction, exhibits an odd mixture of brutality, simplicity, good-nature, and dogged bull-headedness—qualities which have a direct bearing on the shaping of the plot. His character has been portrayed rather cleverly, and entitles the author to a degree of credit. Mr. Young has a graphic and highly colored style, calculated to entertain a reader of not too critical tastes. An occasional clumsiness in sentence structure detracts somewhat from the enjoyment that the book might have for a person of discrimination.

THE GILDED ROSE. By May Christie. Putnam. \$2.

THE HAPPY FAILURE. By Solita Solano. Putnam. \$2.

ZATTHU. By Edmund H. Sears. Cornhill. \$2.
FREE. By Elizabeth Irons Folsom. Macaulay. \$2 net.

A LADY OF NEW ORLEANS. By Edwina Levin MacDonald. Macaulay. \$2 net.

CAPTAIN SALVATION. By Frederick William Wallace. Minton, Balch. \$2.

AKIBA. By Marcus Lehmann. New York: Jewish Forum Publishing Co.

A FOUNTAIN SEALED. By Anne Douglas Sedgwick. Houghton Mifflin. \$2.50.

Foreign

AUTOUR D'EMERSON. By Henri Michaud. Paris: Bossard.

LE PROBLEME DE REGIONALISME. By Henri Hauser. Yale University Press.

LE REVITALLEMENT DE LA BELGIQUE. By Albert Henry. Le Presses Universitaires de France. (Yale University Press).

LE SACRIFICE DE PAUL CLERMONT. By Warrington Dawson. Paris: Perrin.

FRENCH SHORT STORIES. Selected by T. B. Rudmore-Brown. Oxford University Press. \$1.20.

Government

APPEAL TO AMERICANS. Republic Reforms. By Desha Denton. American Library Service. \$5.50.

THE HOME OFFICE. By Sir Edward Troup. Putnam. \$2.

THE MORAL STANDARDS OF DEMOCRACY. By Henry Wilkes Wright. Appleton. \$3.

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT. By Frederic A. Ogg and P. Orman Ray. Century. \$3.75 net.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP. By Carl D. Thompson. Crowell. \$3 net.

History

THE HISTORY AND LITERATURE OF CHRISTIANITY FROM TERTULLIAN TO BOETHIUS. By PIERRE DE LABRIOLLE. Translated from the French by HERBERT WILSON. Knopf. 1925.

This is Vol. V. of "The History of Civilization," a series of some 200 volumes actual and proposed, of which seven out of the twelve thus far published are translations from the French series entitled "L'Evolution de l'Humanité." If the remainder of the French series equals the work of Professor Labriolle its standard will be high. He brings to his task of tracing the growth of the Latin literature of the Church from 200 to 550 A. D. a wealth of learning judiciously subordinated to human interest in lucid French style. The result is to make these neglected ecclesiastical writers of the period of Rome's decadence live again in the imagination of the reader. It is a pity so excellent a writing should deteriorate so sadly in translation. Mr. Wilson suffers from two weaknesses as a translator, one an inability to write English the other an inability to understand French. Mere ignorance of the subject matter was perhaps to be expected, hence the reader has perhaps no right to complain if he must do his own translating of the names of well known ecclesiastical writers such as Eusebius, Lactantius, and the like (who appear as "Eusebe," "Lactance," etc.), but why should Old Testament references appear in the form "Josué" "Isaïas," "Jeremias," etc.? Why should the new Academy appear as "the new Academie," and Apollonius of Tyana take a place in the French aristocracy as "de" Tyana? A good proof-reader might have corrected the frequent blunders of spelling but skill and learning suited to first-class translation are unfortunately obtainable in these days at a starvation wage. It is inexcusable that an American firm of publishers should treat the rendering of Labriolle's scholarly volume as if it were a mere job to be turned over to the office boy.

PREHISTORIC MAN: A General Outline of Prehistory. By JACQUES DE MORGAN. Knopf. 1925.

This volume is one of a series in the French "L'Evolution de l'Humanité." Its

translation into English forms a part of a series "The History of Civilization," edited by C. K. Ogden. It is probably a good thing for the science of Prehistory that it can be and is approached by so many avenues. The historic is only one of many approaches; it is the one which the author makes use of, and if the volume has shortcomings, lack of familiarity with some of the other methods of approach might well be assigned as a contributing cause.

Another cause, perhaps even more serious, is reflected in the nature of the Bibliography listed at the end of this volume. This bibliography is made up of three parts: Periodicals, General Works, and Special Works. The periodicals which are listed simply by name and with date of first issue, cannot be considered as a criterion of the up-to-date quality of the particular articles which might have been utilized by the author. When it comes to general and special works, the case is different; the date of issue means everything. A new work of a general character in a fast-growing science can well afford to give credit to pioneer works in the same field even if these have become antiquated. With the more recent works, there is no choice; they simply must not be ignored if the author's bibliography is to reflect the sources on which he has drawn.

There are fifty-six works listed in the bibliography under "General Works" and "Special Works"; the date of publication is not given in eighteen. Of the thirty-eight in which the date is given, twenty-one were published prior to 1900 and seventeen in 1900 and later. Again, of the thirty-eight dated publications, twenty-one were published prior to 1890, and only one in the last dozen years (Boule's "Les Hommes Fossiles"). One scans the list in vain for the names of Breuil, Capitan, Comont, Henri Martin, Peyrony, de Saint-Périer, among French authors; Obermaier in Spain; Burkitt, Macalister, R. A. Smith, Sollas, in England; R. R. Schmidt, Wiegner, in Germany; and Bächler, Schenck, Viollier, and Vouga in Switzerland.

Failure to make use of a great mass of recent literature on the subject also becomes apparent when one examines the author's text. He fails to recognize the necessity of stratigraphy as a basis for the classification of stone-age cultures. It is true that the so-called *coup-de-poing* may be found in three successive epochs of the Paleolithic Period, just as some fossil animal forms persist through a series of epochs. The best the author can do is to classify it as of the Paleolithic Period, to which may be given the added designation of type: Chellean, Acheulian, or Mousterian as the case may be. But why ignore the fact that the Chellean type occurs in the sands and gravels beneath the ancient loess, that the Acheulian type (or types) occurs in the ancient loess, and that the Mousterian type belongs in the recent loess? What better classificatory data can one demand than a succession of types corresponding with a succession of geological deposits?

The attempt to do away with the Chellean, Acheulian, and Mousterian Epochs may have influenced the author in his decision to rob the Paleolithic Period of its last three epochs which he has given to a new period called the "Archeolithic." The author rightly retains the old nomenclature for these three epochs—Aurignacian, Solutrean, and Magdalenian. These three cultures are found stratigraphically above the Mousterian in the recent loess. The recent loess is a geological unit. If the Mousterian of the recent loess belongs to the Paleolithic Period, why should not the Aurignacian, Solutrean, and Magdalenian also belong to the Paleolithic Period?

In the chapter on art we find: "Except for a few deer in stone discovered at Solutré, all the animal representations known at present belong to Magdalenian culture." This is a sweeping statement and would probably be as difficult to substantiate as the following: "The Bison, very frequent in the caves, usually represented in natural size, and sometimes in large herds, is . . ."

The volume deals briefly with the Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze, and Iron Age cultures. Short chapters are devoted to hunting, fishing, animal domestication and agriculture, dress and ornament, etc. The work is confined solely to the cultural evolution of man leaving the problems of physical evolution and race to be treated in a later volume and by a different author. The reader should not overlook the interesting foreword by Henri Berr. The translation is by J. H. Paxton and V. C. C. Collum.

THE CHRISTIAN RENAISSANCE. By Albert Hyma. Century. \$4.

THE JESUIT MARTYRS OF NORTH AMERICA. By John J. Wynne. New York: Universal Knowledge Foundation. \$1.50.

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