

The New Books Fiction

(Continued from preceding page)

sea or sky. There is plenty in his situation, even too much! The structure erected upon this uncertain base is, however, quite fair to see, and one reads on, astonished to feel a growing interest in the tiny social organism of the island captives; one is stirred by their calamities, and their artificialities are forgotten. It is not so much that Mr. Collins succeeds in writing away the patent absurdities of his romantic hypothesis. But, thanks to the terse eloquence of a rather breathless style, he generates an atmosphere in which anything is possible.

INVISIBLE WOUNDS. By FREDERICK PALMER. Dodd, Mead. 1925. \$2.

If you can accord a full portion of reality to the pair of abnormals around whom Mr. Palmer has written his deliberately psychopathic tale, the story of their troubles works out true enough. Queer people exist in real life—why not in fiction? Party of the first part, a young woman turned loose in the modern world with an eighteenth century upbringing and no chaperone; reared in a sort of New England house of seven gables by a recluse father who tarries mentally in the era of Lafayette and Rochambeau, she is turned loose on the world an orphan with ten thousand a year. So she sets out for Paris all by herself, with the intention of seeing life, a thing of which in a vague way she suspects the existence. Party of the second part, a young man, heir to quite a crushing number of millions, has in a safe deposit box papers that terrify him; they relate to his paternity and the early life of his lamented mother. An infirm will drives him to run away from the papers and to forget his troubles, also in Paris.

When these two odd young persons meet in Montmartre, it is quite on the cards that they should fall in love and follow their inclination without stopping to sign any marriage register; likewise natural that the young man's purse-proud father and managing aunt should play on his weakness and credulity to call him off when at last he does seek the jeweler's for a wedding ring. As for dismissing the disappearing young man, a young woman of spirit might do that also, might even resolve to deny him forever a share in the son of their union, if she had ten thousand a year.

It takes eight years to bring the estranged pair to harmony and matrimony. The war intervenes, and Mr. Palmer turns to good use his familiarity with ambulances and dressing stations. The errant young man at least does not run away from the enemy. In the end, and most appropriately, it takes the services of a skilled psychiatrist to bring the pair together. For a young man with a strong natural bent for running away from his troubles and banishing them from his consciousness, eight years is perhaps a long time to remember and to desire.

THE TREASURE. By SELMA LAGERLÖF. Translated from the Swedish by ARTHUR G. CHATER. Doubleday, Page. 1925. \$2.

This is the sixteenth volume by Selma Lagerlöf to bear the imprint of her American publisher, and one does not have to be hardy to predict for it a cordial welcome despite the fact that it is rather badly translated. For Fröken Lagerlöf has done in "The Treasure" what she has come to be rightly noted for: she has told a convincing tale that can be most succinctly described as real unreality. Few of the incidents of this narrative could have happened, a fact, however, that remains completely submerged until, having read the story, one lays aside it and engages in an attempt to rationalize it. Then it becomes clear that we have read a modernized saga from sixteenth century Sweden when the Reformation decreed the deportation of the Roman priests on the condition, that if their lives were to be spared, they hand over such treasures, in the way of legal tender, as their profession of faith had made it legitimate to hoard up. Into this tale of fewer than 30,000 words Selma Lagerlöf has injected a problem as profound, really, as is contained in the average Greek tragedy of 1500 words: what can a little girl do but make the supreme sacrifice if her sole hope on earth is a man who should be shot?

THE BLACK MAGICIAN. By R. T. M. SCOTT. Dutton. 1925. \$2.

Aurelius (Secret Service) Smith, whose exploits in apprehending criminals have elsewhere won him international fame, is here pitted against his most fearful foe, the 400 year old Jerome Cardan, super-hypnotist, dread necromancer, master of black art, wizard of Oriental magic, in a prolonged fight to a finish. There are intense moments when the conflict draws perilously close to disaster for the wily Smith, who like the *Pathe News* sees all and knows all, but in the end victory rewards him and the prison gates open to his enemy. But stay, Cardan, though wounded and captive, is far from dead, so within the next year we expect to hear of his escape and of his seeking out the intrepid Smith for a renewal of the struggle.

THE RELUCTANT DUCHESS. By ALICE DUER MILLER. Dodd, Mead. 1925. \$1.75.

Here is a love story about a seventeen-year-old heiress who is sought in marriage by a personable, youthful, and not completely impoverished British Duke. The dear child really loves him, almost at sight, but when she discovers that the match has been planned and launched by her parents and the suitor before the pair have ever met, her pride is hurt. She just won't have him. But of course, in the end, she does, and we know that they will be happy. There isn't enough substance here to provide even a third rate movie scenario. It is disappointing that Mrs. Miller, who has unquestionable ability as a novelist, should descend to the boiling of such stale, thin tripe.

CAPTAIN SALVATION. By FREDERICK WILLIAM WALLACE. Minton, Balch. 1925. \$2.

The undeniable dramatic power to which Mr. Wallace's sea romance rises when at its best is all but lost amid the alien mass of exaggerated, wildly unrestrained ravings incessantly uttered by the hero while defying the Will of God. Anson Campbell is a ruthlessly egoistic sea captain, imbued with Nietzschean ideals of personal omnipotence, enslaved by savage sensuality, the love of women and drink, which in the end claims its inevitable toll before he awakens to the need of regeneration. The dozen years of his Odyssey cover his rise from an able seaman of twenty to his attainment of a merchant master's command and the ownership of his sailing vessel, innumerable adventures in amorous dissipations, shipwreck, mutiny, gory combat, till finally comes his submission to simple, purifying peace.

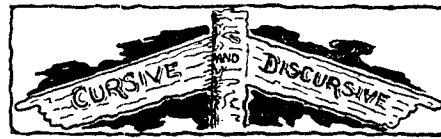
Anson's real figure is obscured by the dense fogs of his materialistic creeds, his disordered erudition, his shrieking frenzies of self-assertion, and the brutally unnatural ferocity with which he subjects others to his tyranny. There was distinct promise in the earlier stages of the book that Anson might develop into a convincing human likeness, but as the tale progresses he is gradually distorted into a bestial caricature, repellent and grotesque beyond reason.

A LADY OF NEW ORLEANS. By EDWINA LEVIN MACDONALD. Macaulay. 1925. \$2.

Miss MacDonald's novel is a crude and weepy variation of "She Loved Too Well," told in the first person so that the heroine may unfold, directly and in full, her cruel, but deserved trials, to readers who may possibly be interested. The strayed one suffers continuously from violent sexual hysterics, easing her pains by pouring forth a deluge of lachrymose moralizing, despairing appeals to God, maudlin self-reproaches, and belated regrets. In howling for our sympathy, however, she is at the disadvantage of having, wilfully and without a single mitigating circumstance, been responsible for her initial misstep and her ensuing difficulties.

THE HEART OF SALOME. By ALLEN RAYMOND. Small, Maynard. 1925. \$2.

It is probable that Mr. Raymond's book was written with no intention of "making comical," yet we are in his debt for many a hearty chuckle. We are sorry we laughed, but there are certain types of bad writing which always affect us that way. His modern Salome, despite her fearful ravages of the male sex, is reminiscent of Topsy's: "I'm so wicked." The narrative in which she serves as principal is a



THIS is the day of Paper Faces, and we feel that there are entirely too many Paper Faces. It has become a strange and artificial era.

We don't mind human faces, even the most weird and badly put-together human faces. The more odd they are, the more we like to study them, over the top of our newspaper or out of the corner of our eye. Human faces are usually netted or seamed by experience, pinched and patted into interesting contours by disaster and happiness. You can read a great many things in any human face, things that are worth reading and pondering.

What we object to are all these Paper Faces. To any reader of periodicals—and are we not all readers of periodicals nowadays—they must eventually become a sort of a nightmare. We don't mean just the faces of Famous People. Of course, it stands to reason that the face of the President of the United States and the face of the Prince of Wales ambush you in every Graphic supplement and leap at you many times a day from newsprint and calendared stock. We object a lot more to "The Man You Can Equal," to "Miss South Saugatuck," to the face of the uninteresting person who declaims in large headlines, "I Made One Dollar Do the Work of Two," or the girl in the "Stenos of Prominent Businessmen" series. We have got long past inveighing against the pretty-girl faces on the magazine covers. The pretty-girl face has, we are convinced, come to stay. It has held on now, as the best magazine cover bet, for a sufficient number of years to prove that contention. Why it is the best bet we still do not know, but at last we recognize that it is.

But to return to "The Man You Can Equal" and "Miss Saugatuck" and "I Made One Dollar, etc." In the first place, we aren't interested in equalling that man, or even approximating him. What did he do? He took a certain correspondence course and thereby hopped his salary from twenty five hundred to five thousand a year,—or he sold so many copies of The Magazine with A Million,—or perhaps he only used a certain shaving stick or prevented tooth decay below the gum line. "Miss South Saugatuck," of course, won a Beauty Contest, by exactly paralleling a set of, after all, arbitrary measurements of the woman form divine. And the person who did with one dollar what you could hardly do with two,—well, we see no reason for raptly gazing upon the large, almost life-size presentment of him—or her—that grins staringly at us from a full magazine page.

All these Paper Faces are meant to arrest us, haunt us, shame us, encourage us, stir us to tremendous deeds or make us sorry we aren't nearly so successful as they are. Then there are, of course, the thousand and one Paper Faces of Great Authors, Great Movie People, Great Self-made People, Great Confessionists, Great Managers of Vacuum Cleaners, Furnaces, Oven Heat Regulators, Great Cigarette Smokers, Great Perfume Users, and so on, and so on. And most of these faces are smiling or simply looking noble and efficient in a superior fashion that

we find intensely aggravating.

We cannot escape these great Paper Faces. If we give up reading and simply look out of a train window or around us in the street, they accost us in even larger proportions from a myriad hoardings and sign-boards. Sometimes the more than lifesize men portraits point accusing fingers at us. Sometimes both men and women stare out of a shop window, done in oil, with actual Sitright Spectacles on their haughty noses. Always these faces lift above the latest clothes or frocks, the men always sport immaculate stiff white collars. Their ties are always tied just right. Their chins are aggressive and their brows bend with latent power. The ladies are always intensely earnest or intensely sweet looking. Sometimes they combine both qualities. Great Big Faces, Facing Forty, or Forgetting Sixty, or Robust at Seventy or Right After a Career at Twenty! And half of the names we read under them we never heard of before and never will again. For a little period they dominate a single page, smile their sweetest, look their most earnest, stick their chins out as far as they can, clasp their faces in every possible grip known to the human hand. They are exemplars, avatars, shining examples. We can't duck them! And consequently we have grown to hate them.

Not that we should hate nine out of ten of these people in real life. Four-fifths of them we should probably find nothing in common with, but the remaining fifth might easily become pleasant acquaintances. They probably wouldn't be bad at all, as human beings. But as they shine from the magazine pages, toiling earnestly, laughing happily, brooding somberly, looking up brightly—they, frankly, give us the pip! And sometimes, when we see a friend's face thus displayed, we are inclined to exclaim, "Aw, Ed, come out of it! We know all about you!"

Yet how the General Public seems to dote upon these great Paper Faces. They pore over them as though they were reading in them Plutarch's Lives, as though they were gazing upon the truly great of the earth. The minute anyone does anything a little out of the ordinary, it seems to us, his or her face is immediately reproduced as large as the page will hold and enters the Paper Face Pantheon with new radiance.

The point is, these Paper Faces aren't the Real People. The real people are probably not one millionth as ostentatious as their pictures would make them appear. They really don't care about proving to you that they have better teeth or a better digestion or a bigger salary or slicker hair or a profounder experience of life than you have yourself. In a way they are the victims of our great age of Publicity. And when they tell us all about how they care for their skin and how many cakes of yeast they eat before breakfast they don't actually mean to be as offensive as they appear. They probably would have been perfectly contented to go ahead in privacy taking a picture of baby in his bathing suit with their Special Shutter Kodak if some Publicity Manager hadn't stalked them as an excellent ad.

Nevertheless, I'm sorry to say that these Paper Faces continue to give me a pain. They seem at present an ineradicable feature of all periodicals. And I can't give up reading periodicals now, because I have become an addict. So there I am! I suffer.

W. R. B.

concoction of sissified, hyperbolic trash whose appropriate place is the serial columns of the *Daily News*. This is Mr. Raymond's first novel; he should train long and improve tremendously before he publishes another.


GREEN BUSH. By JOHN T. FREDERICK. Knopf. 1925. \$2.50.

A good half of "Druidia," Mr. Frederick's first novel, suggested "My Antonia" without imitating it; and in spite of his inequalities of narrative Mr. Frederick gave promise of being far richer in creative power than the mass of prairie novelists. In "Green Bush" he does not belie that promise, but he does not entirely confirm it. It has good things in it, but it has ineffective things also.

"Green Bush" is definitely a novel of the soil. Its scene is Michigan, near Lake Huron; its hero, Frank Thompson, is the son of a small-town editor who loves farming. Frank himself is an Ann Arbor graduate whose mother wishes him to ad-

vance in a larger world than that of Green Bush; but he comes to love the soil, marries a farmer's daughter, and with the money he inherits from his parents, buys a farm and starts in to work it. The farm comes within a notch of crippling him physically for life; but in spite of its harshness and of the offer he receives to teach at Ann Arbor, he holds firm to his acres.

Just how far Mr. Frederick's own feelings for the life of the soil are represented in Frank Thompson's, and how far they exist in Frank as an objective creation, one cannot precisely judge; but that this elevation of rural life is the theme of the book is certified by the didactic insistence with which the author drives it home. It fights its way to the top above all the counter-arguments which Mr. Frederick is wise enough to present. And it is this very emphasis which makes the emotion somewhat ineffective; it becomes too palpable and external. The atmosphere, the beauty, the nobility of the soil come to us more validly when they



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come more subtly, as in "My Antonia." One cannot find Mr. Frederick's feeling or his realism at fault; the imperfection in "Green Bush" is an artistic one. This same limited artistry gives us good description rather than poetry, and on occasion, narrative which is slightly colorless and amateur. Frank Thompson is by no means the equal of Druida; he lives, but with not enough variety and alteration of mood to live fully. His mother, however, is an excellent portrait; and had Mr. Frederick done more with him than to involve him in a melodramatic episode, his father-in-law might have been equally excellent.

But these weaknesses do not rob the book of interest and vigor. Mr. Frederick has created something powerful and occasionally beautiful; he has further created a novel of the soil which falls on the positive rather than the negative side, glorifying as it does the farmer's life instead of concentrating upon its stupidity and barrenness and dullness. A mingled touch of the pathetic and the heroic, at the end, leaves Frank not without distinction. Once again we must wait for a really fine novel by Mr. Frederick; but once again we can wait for it with confidence.

THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO AND THE MYSTERIOUS MONSTER. By Horace Walpole. Edited by Montague Summers. Houghton Mifflin. \$12.50.

SKOOKUM CHUCK. By Stewart Edward White. Doubleday. Page. \$2 net.

PIGS IS PIGS. By Ellis Park Butler. Doubleday. Page. \$1 net.

FIVE ORIENTAL TALES. By Comte de Gobineau. Viking Press. \$2.50 net.

THE SILENT VOICE. By Berenice V. Dell. Four Seas.

THE OUTCAST. By Luigi Pirandello. Translated by Leo Ongley. Dutton. \$2.50.

Y' UNDERSTAND. By Montague Glass. Doubleday. Page. \$2 net.

THIRTEEN. By F. Britten Austin. Doubleday. Page. \$2 net.

THE DEATH OF A MILLIONAIRE. By G. D. H. and Margaret Cole. Macmillan. \$2.

DARK LAUGHTER. By Sherwood Anderson. Boni & Liveright. \$2.50.

THE MARRIAGE GUEST. By Konrad Bercovicz. Boni & Liveright. \$2.

VOLCANO. By Ralph Straus. Holt. \$2.

DEMOCRACY. By Henry Adams. Holt. \$2.

SEA LAVENDER. By Sydney Floyd Gowing. Holt. \$2.

ROMANCE—THE LOVELIEST THING. By Dorothy Black. Holt. \$2.

THE HALF LOAF. By Agnes Mure Mackenzie. Doubleday. Page. \$2 net.

VALOR OF THE RANGE. By Laurie York Erskine. Appleton. \$2.

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WALLS OF FIRE. By Marc Worth. Cosmopolitan. \$2 net.

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THE HOUSE OF MENDOZA. By Cordes Nere. Dorrance. \$2.

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THE WINGS OF JEZEBEL PETTYFER. By Haldan Macfall. Knopf. \$3 net.

THE SAILOR'S RETURN. By David Garnett. Knopf. \$2 net.

PIANO. By Edward Sackville West. Knopf. \$2.50 net.

THE BOOK ABOUT LITTLE BROTHER. By Gustav af Geijerstam. Knopf. \$2.50 net.

THE INFORMER. By Liam O'Flaherty. Knopf. \$2.50 net.

HADRIAN THE SEVENTH. By Frederick Baron Corvo. Knopf. \$3 net.

WINNERS AND LOSERS. By Alice Hagan Rice and Cale Young Rice. Century. \$2.

ANDREW BRIDE OF PARIS. By Henry Lyndner Harrison. Houghton Mifflin. \$2.

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The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

For an answer to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to Mrs. Becker, c/o The Saturday Review.

A BALANCED RATION

By PANG MANERA. Translated by Arthur W. Ryder. (University of Chicago Press.)

LEAVES FROM A WAR DIARY. By James G. Harbord. (Dodd, Mead.)

TRY PACE. By Edith Sitwell. (Knopf.)

S. S. C., New York, asks for "a body of instruction for young writers who are inexperienced in preparing manuscript for the printer": she has already "Text, Type and Style," by George B. Ives, Manly's "Manual for Writers," Holliday's "Business of Writing," and Vize-telly's "Preparation of Manuscript for the Printer."

SINCE this letter arrived, I printed a reply to a letter much like it, naming books; since then, however, a new one has been added to the list by the University of Chicago Press. This is a new edition, completely rewritten, of their "Manual of Style," which has been an authority for twenty years. It is for printers, editors, proofreaders, and advertisers, or anyone who has to do with the making of books.

R. M. K., Stamford, Conn., asks for novels with the scene laid on the Maine coast, especially the region north of Portland, and asks if Henry Milner Rideout has not developed this field.

"THE WINTER BELL," by Henry Milner Rideout, (Duffield), brings the reader into the Maine woods in winter: it is one of the murder stories that I remember, probably because the interest is deeper than the solution of a problem, being in the state of mind of the unjustly accused. His "Beached Keels" (Houghton Mifflin) is three stories of the shore life of sailors on the Northeast coast. In Holman Day's "The Skipper and the Skipped" (Harper) a retired sailor tries shore life in a Maine village, his "King Spruce" (Harper) is about the timber regions of the State. Sara Orne Jewett's "Country of the Pointed Firs" (Houghton Mifflin) is a classic of Maine seacoast literature. "Vesty of the Basins," Sarah Pratt McLean's story of the Maine coast (Harper) did not make such a commotion as her famous "Cape Cod Folks," which was so accurate that it made her extremely unpopular, but is said to have good local color.

N. H. R., Mississippi, asks for books on Peru besides those named in the section given to this country in the H. W. Wilson study outline of South America.

THE most recent book, so far as I know, and surely the most gorgeous, is "Bird Islands of Peru," by Robert Cushman Murphy (Putnam). This is the report of a naturalist sent to study the birds that produce guano, accurate as such a document must be, but brilliant in its descriptions and abounding in humor—altogether a delightful volume for anyone who must do his exploring vicariously. "Peru," by E. C. H. Vivian (Appleton), is one of a series on South American countries intended for business men. The travel books of that inveterate tramp, Harry A. Franck, are always good for pictures of customs and conditions: in his "Vagabonding Down the Andes" (Century) and "Working North From Patagonia" (Century) he covers all South America. The American Museum of Natural History publishes a ten-cent pamphlet

on "Peruvian art as shown on textiles and pottery," but I do not know where this inquirer can get the information she asks on contemporary Peruvian artists.

WHEN I left New York it was with a commission to purchase a book, if one could anywhere be found, on the wall-covering known as *toile de Jouy*. I have pursued it through the bookshops of two countries and none can I find. It is not in "Historic Wallpapers," by Nancy McClelland (Lippincott), which I marvelled at for its beauty and thoroughness when I saw it in Batsford's, where books on art are most likely to be found in England. I do not recall it in Phyllis Ackerman's "Wallpaper" (Stokes), the first book to appear on the subject in English, and for many years the only one in the field: this also is illustrated. If anyone can tell me where to look for a book that tells more about these charming designs, I shall be very glad.

G. H. E., Philadelphia, Pa., asks for novels about the old days of steamboating on the Mississippi, "like Mark Twain's great book."

"PARTNERS OF PROVIDENCE," by Charles David Stewart (Houghton Mifflin), is a humorous account of steamboating on the Missouri and Mississippi. The most exciting chapters of Thomas Boyd's "The Dark Cloud" (Scribner) are those that take his boy-hero down the river; this book is one that I believe anyone interested in the problems of adolescence should read. The cloud in question is the heavy shadow of self-consciousness and self-distrust that rolls away as he grows up—indeed its rolling away is the sign that he has grown up.

C. C., Wheeling, W. Va., asks who publishes the "Scott Library" mentioned by John Cowper Powys in his "100 Best Books."

THE small red volumes of "The Scott Library" were originally published by Walter Scott of Paternoster Row at one shilling and sixpence, though on the book-stalls where one generally looks for them they go for one and six. This inquiry gave me an excuse for yet another prowling along Charing Cross Road, where I found, in No. 71 of this series, a book of selections from *The Athenian Mercury*, one copy of which (an original) has been for months my cherished possession. For this was a magazine published in the seventeenth century for the purpose of answering any questions that the public might ask, and the copy I have has one so much like those addressed to the Guide that it was like coming upon the portrait of an unsuspected ancestor. This volume in the Scott Library, called "The Athenian Oracle," covers even more points than the "Reader's Guide Book," for not the least interesting answers are those relating to seventeenth century love-affairs, superstitions, and popular science. The series goes from Aristotle to Longfellow and has some titles I have not elsewhere found in popular editions, but as a whole it does

(Continued on last page)

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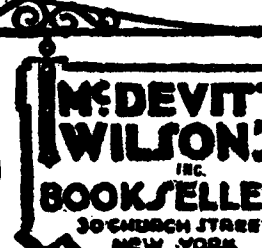
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