

of pirates, especially about Cuban waters, as the mildest of bloodthirsty collectors of pirate lore can desire.

The present volume brings this to mind and also provides the rapidly growing pirate cult with a convenient reprint of nineteen items dealing for the most part with outstanding nautical cutthroats, such as Captains Mission, Tew, Halsey, Bellamy, Fly, Williams, Burgess, and about a dozen others. There is also an interesting account of the stock pirate figure, Captain Kidd, that is more complete but not so well told as Lord Macaulay's account of that gentleman in his "History of England."

The book purports to be a reprint of an early nineteenth century volume said to be rare. There are nine interesting illustrations, reproductions of old black and white cuts, and 295 pages of exciting, direct, and now somewhat quaint narrative. The invalid-passenger's story, reprinted from the *American Monthly Magazine* for February, 1824, was an old favorite. We have seen many a gap in old newspapers stopped with this narrative. It went the rounds till 1835 at least. The knell of piracy was sounded in 1823 when Commodore Stephen Porter first employed steam war vessels in the West Indies: Porter sailed from Baltimore on January 16, 1823. As a midshipman, between 1812 and 1815, he had seen hard fighting on the old "Essex" against both the South Sea Islanders and the British, and he had not forgotten his training. The pirates soon disappeared from the West Indies. Porter and his steam engines were the death of romance.

The present book recalls all this very pleasantly, nowadays, and may serve to remind us that items bearing the dates of the 1820's are now more than a century in the past. This reprint is decidedly worth while.

LORD MINTO. By JOHN BUCHAN. Houghton Mifflin. 1925. \$7.50.

Minto was the great grandson of the first earl, Sir Gilbert Elliot, friend of Burke and Nelson, first Governor-General of India. His grandfather was a famous ambassador and his father, choosing the *via media*, was a respected member of Parliament and an industrious Country Gentleman.

With such a legacy of distinction, this Elliot embarked upon his career, but neither at Eton nor at Cambridge did he achieve anything, except lasting popularity. A short spell in the Guards proved distasteful and for more than thirty years he jockeyed his horses on the racecourse, until a broken back put an end to it, travelled the world as a pseudo-journalist, a sportsman and disembodied soldier, sometimes active.

It is a curious fact that from the life of an idler, Minto was able to mold a career that astonished his friends and brought nothing but honor upon his family and credit upon the nation. A significant reminder of the utility of aristocracies. In 1898 he became Governor General of Canada at a time of great difficulty, not helped by the fact that the Liberal Sir Wilfred Laurier was in power in Canada and the Conservative Joseph Chamberlain was enthroned at the Colonial office in London. It was due to his tact, his even temper, his knowledge of men, which he later avowed was picked up on the racecourse, and his almost clairvoyant wisdom that he was able to keep on the best of terms with these two men, each of whom had not much love for the other. Canada under him became a Dominion in fact as well as name, and Minto emerged a convinced imperialist.

His next and last important post was the Viceroyalty of India, in which he succeeded Lord Curzon. By the production of hitherto unpublished letters the author sheds new light upon the character of that Liberal politician and Conservative statesman, Lord Morley, then Secretary of State for India, and provides new material for judgment on the responsibility for the Minto-Morley Reforms. Lord Morley's "Recollections" divides the honors as they ought to be shared, but Colonel Buchan gives us the concrete facts and they are that Minto took the first step toward the Reforms and in manifold ways made them possible. Moreover, we discover that the Minto-Morley correspondence was not so amiable and scintillating as Morley made out. Colonel Buchan shows that there were stiff passages of arms on both sides and that Morley was not always the victor.

The author brings out a very wonderful side of a very great character. In India, Minto the administrator, was at his best. He was tolerant to a high degree, more clear sighted than most of his advisors, as brave in the face of danger as a soldier ought to be, and as firm as a wise man always is.

That there were other sides to him goes without saying as does the fact that Colonel Buchan does not say them. But, when he left India, there was no doubt that he had been the most popular Viceroy that had ever reigned for the absent Emperor.

There is only one fault to find with the author. His style is as worthy as ever and his treatment sympathetic and penetrating, has made the book a biography that ranks high in his list of non-fiction works; but we detect too much the historian and too little the biographer, which is, after all, confusing two kinds of history. On the other hand, the information we get from the book is considerable, not least of which is a clear understanding of imperial administration.

PORTRAITS AND PORTENTS. By A. G. Gardiner. Harpers. \$3.

MY OWN STORY. By Fremont Older. Macmillan. \$2.50.

THE LINLEYS OF BATH. By Clementina Black. Minton, Balch. \$5.

WINE, WOMEN, AND WAR: A DIARY OF DISILLUSIONMENT. Sears.

HOMESPUN HEROINES AND OTHER WOMEN OF DISTINCTION. By Hallie I. Brown. Homewood Cottage. Wilberforce, Ohio.

JOHN HORNE TOOKE. By Minnie Clarke Yarrow. Columbia University Press. \$2.50.

THE LETTERS OF WILLIAM ROSCOE THAYER. Houghton Mifflin. \$5.

TAR: A MIDWEST CHILDHOOD. By Sherwood Anderson. Boni & Liveright. \$3.

I HAVE THIS TO SAY. By Violet Hunt. Boni & Liveright. \$3.50.

THE LAST LOVE OF AN EMPEROR. By Comtesse Louise de Mercy-Argenteau. Edited by the Comtesse de Mortigand. Doubleday, Page. \$3 net.

THE WHISPERING GALLERY. By an Ex-Diplomat. Boni & Liveright. \$3.

THE BELOVED PHYSICIAN. By Sir James Mackenzie. Macmillan. \$4.

PIERRE LOTI. By Edmund B. D'Auvergne. Stokes. \$5.

STATESMEN AND SOLDIERS OF THE CIVIL WAR. By Maj. Gen. Sir Frederick Maurice. Little, Brown. \$3 net.

HORACE GREELEY. By Don Seitz. Bobbs-Merrill. \$5.

EVERYBODY'S PEPYS. Abridged from the Complete Text and Edited by O. F. Morshead. Illustrated by Ernest H. Shepard. Harcourt, Brace. \$3.50.

JOSEPH CONRAD IN THE CONGO. By G. Jean Aubry. Little, Brown.

A GENERAL HISTORY OF THE LIVES AND ROBBERIES OF THE MOST NOTORIOUS HIGHWAYMEN. By Captain Alexander Smith. Edited by Arthur L. Hayward. Brentanos. \$7.

Drama

MAIN CURRENTS OF MODERN FRENCH DRAMA. By HUGH A. SMITH. Holt. 1925. \$3.

Professor Smith's study of the French drama of the past century takes its subject seriously indeed. Two attitudes may be assumed toward the theatre: it is a place to which we flock to be diverted and amused, or it is the little brother of the church, reaching our soul by devious way of our senses. Brander Matthews has written of the nineteenth century French drama in the chatty, informal style of the after-dinner speaker; despite his introductory discussion of the early divergence of church and stage, Professor Smith's tone distinctly emerges *ex cathedra*. So true is this that the reproduced photographs of actors in costume seem artificially added to the book as a deliberate unbending, a concession to the visual elements of the art.

The formal approach to the drama has its advantages, however, in that the writer is likely to seek behind the changing phenomena of theatrical history for underlying principles and movements. The present volume travels simultaneously along three avenues of approach, all leading to a fair view of the French theatre, but all too straight and narrow to allow survey of the panorama—Professor Smith therefore tries to leap the hedges. He begins by making a commendable effort to deduce the nature of the French theatre from the character of the French people, a sociological method that might afford interesting parallels, if it were not drawn to extreme application. The personification of abstract qualities in the morality play and in Molière, for instance, is attributed to "the French interest in the universal and typical;" as though this characteristic were not equally strong in the English "Everyman" and in the Roman Plautus. A second approach proceeds from Corneille, finding in him the "major foundations of modern French drama: interior or motivated action, free-will or self-determination, and moral or mental drama rather than purely physical action on tragedy." This view again seeks to claim as purely French what is equally true of modern drama every-

(Continued on next page)

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The New Books Drama

(Continued from preceding page)

where, while at the same time it bars from consideration all plays lacking in that serious approach to life which is the author's. The third initial avenue of the author determines the plan of his book: he views the progress of the theatre as a romantic revolt against the classical traditions, with—by way of the romantic urge to imitate nature—a later sweep into realism. This division, however, can be strictly maintained only by disregarding chronology, by linking Rostand and Musset, by explaining Mæterlinck, the Belgian, away from the current of the French spirit, and thus avoiding the problem of fitting symbolism into the schema.

Despite these roadside difficulties, and an unwillingness to scan the nearby ground of the past decade (Lenormand, Vildrac, etc.) the volume affords a fair prospect of its field. At times the high intent of the author yields an excess of indignation, as in his derogatory definition of melodrama, or in his insistence that a "rascal" portrayed with sympathetic insight is "dangerous." The lack of suavity, however, is counterbalanced by the fulness of zeal; Professor Smith presents a thorough, if not an irreproachable, analysis of the main currents of modern French drama.

TRANSLATIONS AND TOMFOOLERIES. By BERNARD SHAW. Brentano's 1926. \$2.25.

In his brief prefaces and notes to the present volume Shaw admits—with, for once, just a touch of wryness in his smile—that he has turned out his scrap-basket. Certainly the scrap-basket of a man of genius is a source of book-making not wholly to be despised! The mere table-talk of some men is far better worth preserving than the life-works of others. But while it is true that a few amusing passages and cantankerous quips are here added to the stupendous record, it cannot honestly be said that Shaw's scrap-basket has yielded anything to surprise us, anything indeed which we could not very well have worried along without. Still . . . is that quite fair, we wonder? Are we beginning to develop an Aristides Complex? Are we tiring a little of hearing Shaw call himself—although with meticulous accuracy—a brilliant man? And surely it *would* have been a pity to miss (in Shaw's topical sketch of 1909, called "Press Cuttings") the pungent remarks of the Irish charwoman, Mrs. Farrell, to the great General Mitchener.

MITCH.

When a man has risked his life on eight battlefields, Mrs. Farrell, he has given sufficient proof of his self-control to be excused a little strong language.

MRS. F.

Would you put up with bad language from me because I've risked me life eight times in childbed?

MITCH.

My dear Mrs. Farrell, you surely would not compare a risk of that harmless domestic kind . . . etc., etc.

It is characteristic Shaw, though he has done this particular sort of pithy, impudent give-and-take far better elsewhere.

As for the inclusions, *seriatim*: There is a free—very free—translation of a Trebitsch play, the play itself being neither very bad nor very good. There is the not especially entertaining three-act skit in blank verse, drawn from his own novel "Cashel Byron's Profession." There is "Press Cuttings," the best of this random collection; and the four remaining pieces really do not matter at all.

Frankly, it is a rather melancholy occasion, and there is nothing more to be said.

THE SCENEWRIGHT. By ANDRÉ SMITH. Macmillan. 1926.

"Scenewright" at once raises the whole question of standards in the visual side of amateur dramatic productions. It scratches deep into the back-stages of a thousand and one border-footlight theatres that perennially spring up in Sunday schools, barns, and town halls. Mr. Smith in his ten short chapters gently endeavors to show the amateur designer, or "scenewright," "how stage settings are designed, built, and painted, and what a pleasant job it is." In so doing the book unconsciously cross-cuts and reflects the whole point of view on production of the very Little Theatre. All of the work is easy and not as difficult as it seems. So many things can be made of paper-flats, flowers, cycloramas, trees, etc. "A set can

be made in an evening and cost only a few dollars." The author is opposed to "the rather common practice of complete overhead screening at the proscenium arch when this required an unnecessary expenditure in material and labor." The whole book seems to represent the author's own experience, not wholly amateurish, obviously not professional, and based on no real knowledge of the theatre. For whom then is this book intended? Not for the little theatre designer with a sense of craftsmanship in model making, with a workable approach in constructing his scenery and experimenting in various techniques of scene painting, nor is it for the very little theatre designer, for it only re-states and approves his own methods, of a child-can-do-it-paper-and-paste technique.

A hobby that tampers with one of the arts of the theatre is dangerous. As soon as the little theatre designer approaches his work with an understanding that whatever is done in the theatre of fine quality is the result of hours of willing experiment, with the knowledge that whatever goes on to the stage has a perfectly definite medium of the theatre in its handling and treatment, whether in designing, building, or painting, and that he base his amateur income on a professional technique as soon as he has attained this genuine approach of the theatre to his craft, he will not be embarrassed by this present contribution. When the "scenewright" turns scenic designer, we shall see a healthy change affecting the whole tenor of amateur productions.

THE PROCESS OF PLAY PRODUCTION.

By ALLEN CRAFTON and JESSICA ROYER. Crofts. 1926. \$2.25.

This volume covers all that has been said previously on the general subject of play production in the Little Theatre and Amateur Theatricals. However, there is one chapter that justifies the book—a chapter in which the authors take up the study of the play as a foundation for production; so frequently, lack of interpretation of a play by amateurs is the beginning of the end of their performance at a time when the lines are not yet learned. Mr. Crafton, a thorough teacher of his subject, and Miss Royer present a book to guide the amateur and aid the student.

THE DYBBUK. A Play in Four Acts.

By S. ANSKY. Translated from the Original Yiddish by HENRY G. ALSBERG and WINIFRED KATZIN. Boni & Liveright. 1926. \$2.

To those who witnessed the arrestingly beautiful production of "The Dybbuk" this past season, either as given by the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York, or in Chicago by Lee Shubert, this translation of Ansky's play from the original offers an interesting challenge to comparison. For here is not the play as produced but rather the source book for that play. The reproduction was intensely dramatic, ecstatic in mood, symphonic in emotional effect. This original is loosely constructed, episodic, the scenes unmeasured, the dialogue diffuse, showing that Ansky was essentially a novelist, not a playwright, "The Dybbuk" being his first and only finished play. To lift an effective play from this material requires creative production. And this indeed is what had been given Ansky's play, by Vactangov and David Vardi for its now famous first production in 1917 in the Habima Theatre in Moscow, when not this text, but a translation into Hebrew by the Jewish poet C. N. Bialik was used, and again for the two American productions by Vardi.

And yet, even though not ready for the stage, Ansky's original has qualities that justify the prediction that it will, if not already it has done so, become a classic. As folk drama portraying the life of a community of eighteenth century Chasidic Jews in the Ukraine it opens a new and rich ethnological vein;—as pure story it tells a love tale which bids fair to rival that of Romeo and Juliet, or Tristan and Isolde, even transcending these in sheer mystic beauty;—as developing a spiritual theme of universal appeal it leaps, even as does Goethe's "Faust," from the bounds of folk-lore into drama of deep philosophic import, voicing an esotericism not merely Chasidic in origin, but akin to the teachings of the Bible, the Vedas, or the doctrines of Plato.

*Why, from highest height
To deepest depths below,
Has the soul fallen?
Within itself, the Fall
Contains the Resurrection.*

With this song the play opens and closes. All between in tinged with this same trans-

cedentalism, the action taking place in the dim borderland of consciousness between the real and the unreal, over every scene, every character resting the shadow of the world beyond this.

Ansky conceives as a mystic. He works, however, as a realist. Indeed, were it not for his power of realism the story he tells in "The Dybbuk" would quickly have descended into the ridiculous. But never does Ansky so descend. On the contrary, with the humor of a Hogarth, or the color and tenderness of a Vermeer he draws his characters, and what a gallery! The three loquacious Batlanim, or professional prayermen, babbling of miracles over their wine in the old shadowy synagogue at night, Meyer, the tipsy sexton, the wordly merchant Sender, Menasche, the bashful bridegroom, and then with finer touches, the Holy Tsadik with his message of universal brotherhood,—all these, as Ansky draws them, are real people, and while under his spell, for spell he does cast, we believe their story.

As to the merits of this translation as such, one ignorant of Yiddish may not perhaps be competent to judge. The aim of the translators would seem to be, however, to preserve the racy flavor of Ansky's dialogue through direct literalness. The result is that it is in spite of the translation rather than because of it that one senses the wide scope of Ansky's play, or his imaginative use of language.

THE BEST PLAYS OF 1925-1926. By Burns Mantle. Dodd, Mead. \$3.

PLAYS FOR STROLLING MUMMERS. Edited by FRANK SHAY. Appleton. \$2.

THE DRUMS OF OUDA. By Austin Strong. Appleton.

THE CAPTIVE. By Edouard Bourdet. Brentanos. \$2.

Economics

IF I WERE A LABOR LEADER. By ERNEST J. P. BENN. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1926.

Sir Ernest Benn, in spite of being what is usually called a "capitalist" and an employer of labor on a considerable scale, does not hesitate to offer advice to his own and others' employees. From the point of view of one who is invincibly persuaded that workers and employers are—or should be—engaged in a cooperative task of production, he has every right to express an opinion, even to speak as a labor leader. He has done it before; but the recent general strike offers too good a chance to pass up. Its outcome shows, he believes, the falsity of the theory that politics has any place in industry. And especially it shows that the socialists are a rule or ruin crowd whose program is the worst possible one for the British labor movement to adopt.

We could wish that Sir Ernest would not persist in using American experience as an illustration of his own industrial Utopia. Here, he points out to his British friends, every worker has a motor car, a home with a bath-tub in it, and all such appurtenances of life. How does this happen? Because, he explains, in America craft distinctions do not exist, there is no trace of the notion that withholding effort is desirable, or that to make work is beneficial. Any American knows that these are not facts, that, indeed, these notions are only just less prevalent in America than Britain. Only where some great entrepreneur like Henry Ford has succeeded in breaking men to the rhythm of his machines have craft distinctions and make-work theories had any notable jolts.

But aside from his erroneous impression of our attitudes and the causes for our prosperity, he still may be correct in believing that, for Britain, the important matter is to concentrate on production to the exclusion of interest in other social arrangements. He feels, of course, that the workers spend so much time worrying about who is to get the product and advancing the cause of their "class" in the struggle for it, that they have badly neglected the production itself without which there can be no product.

Personally I feel that Sir Ernest had not learned his lesson from the Ford experience well enough. The Fords do not worry about these things. They set a pace by machines to which workers must conform. Machines, not men, at least as workers, create the product. They are completely indifferent to the notions which dominate men. Getting work done is the responsibility of management. And in the Ford way of working it is difficult to see the pertinency of any of the matters discussed in this book. If they, for instance, depended upon exhortations to their own and the nations' workers to be productive, instead of arranging their affairs so that