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GOOD BOOKS

The Reader's Guide

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, c/o The Saturday Review.

A BALANCED RATION

EVERYBODY'S PEPYS. Edited by O. F. MORSEHEAD. Harcourt, Brace.

JESTING PILATE. By ALDOUS HUXLEY. Doran.

DESERT. By MARTIN ARMSTRONG. Harpers.

F. T., *Soldier's Hospital, Sulphur, Okla., to satisfy an interest in Russian life that has been increasing since service overseas, asks for a few novels of Russia, including one of court life as it was in the decade just before the outbreak of the Great War, and one of the revolution and period of transition. He says reminiscences will do in either of these cases if novels are unavailable.*

"O MOTHER DEAR," by Vladimir Poliakoff (Appleton), is undiluted biography, but for the period I prefer it to any novel and it is more absorbing than most of them are. This is the life of the Empress Marie, sister of Queen Alexandra of England, still living in her childhood's home, Copenhagen. The author is generally recognized, under the name "Augur," as one of the most far-sighted and well-informed writers on foreign politics in British journalism to-day. The curious mingling of monotony and tension that made up court atmosphere for years before the war becomes real to the reader, but to me the invaluable pages are those that illuminate the character of the late Empress Alexandra Feodorovna and its effect upon history, and in so doing place one against the other "the precise forms of the logical Western mind" and "the cloudy formless mentality of the Orient."

As for the revolutionary period, I know but one novel in an English translation, I. Libedinsky's "A Week" (Huebsch), and that seems to be out of print, but I hope it is not out of reach, for it gives an unforgettable report of a time of flux that seems to have passed almost without record in fiction. At least, we have none in our language. For times before the War you have of course the novels of Dostoevsky, especially "The Idiot" and "The Karamazoff Brothers" in Mrs. Garnett's translation (Macmillan), though there is a cheaper Dostoevsky in "Everyman's Library," as not every man knows. Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina" goes without saying, and the short stories of Chekhov, especially the volume whose title is from its first story, "The Darling" (Macmillan). By this time the reader will have learned to find his own way about on the book-shelves.

THE Paisley Shawl Episode must be for a moment reopened. I have just had two letters, one from Dr. Mary R. Findlater, Washington, D. C., "a Paisley chiel who is snorting with disdain at any one pitting Paisley in England. Eh whon, the neist thing they'll be moving Edinburgh to Cork!" She reminds us that the city has a history dating back to 600 A. D.: as far back as 1695 its main business was weaving by hand, "and mony a bonnie bit shawl came frae the loom, lang afore the Paisley cam tae be sae unco fashionable."

The other letter is from Frederick Niven, Willow Point, Nelson, British Columbia, and will be taken with delight and gratitude by many a reader of "A Tale that is Told" and other well-loved books:—

"Paisley shawls were made at the town of Paisley in Renfrewshire, Scotland. Between 1805 and the middle of the nineteenth century they were greatly in vogue, their sale, according to Chambers' Encyclopedia, sometimes exceeding one million pounds sterling per annum. I well remember, when I was a very small boy, being taken to visit friends in Paisley by my mother, and how she stopped in a steep street, the sidewalk of which went down in flights of steps, and told me that she wanted me to look at what I would see in a window. She explained that she wanted me to look well because soon what I was to see there would not be seen at all, and that I could say when I was an old man that I had seen it. And I remember it well. A loom was in a long, low window and sitting to one side of it an old man was weaving. Behind him was a dusky interior with one or two shawls hung up there for sale. And we stood awhile outside watching one of the last hand-loom weavers at work. There were even then no young men

employed at the craft, the machine age having come.

"I'm glad to say that we possess a very beautiful Paisley shawl left by my mother. I never look at it but I think it deserves a pæan for the beauty of its workmanship, weave, design, and dripping fringe, after the manner of that one that Hergesheimer bestowed on a Spanish shawl in his Havana book."

Weaving and pottery, the wheel and the loom—how they take hold on the imagination! In this spirit I took my own little girl to watch the last old lady who could produce authentic woven carpets upon the last loom in the Pomfrets, Vermont. She was born here of native parents and talked like a woman in Mary Wilkins, but they still called her French, and explained on that basis the taste of her patterns! I have one underfoot at this moment. Now will all the Scots wha hae written in, please accept this as a closing gesture of goodwill?

S. L. S., *McAlester, Okla., asks for the names of several good new books for girls from twelve to fourteen.*

"PAUL & DYKE, Inc." by Ethel Cook Elliott (Doubleday, Page), stood the test of serial publication in "The American Girl," which has the most up-and-coming readers of any juvenile magazine—at least they write most effectively to the editor about that they like and otherwise and from their reports I can confidently advise the selection of this story. "Becky Landers, Frontier Warrior," by Constance Lindsay Skinner (Macmillan) is a thriller; one is taken to the time in our history when even a young girl had to know woodcraft and the ways of the wilderness, not to get badges, but just to keep alive and unscalped. For the milder-minded there is "Toto and the Gift," by Katherine Adams (Macmillan), a French girl's experiences in and around New York, "Jane," by Archibald Marshall (Dodd, Mead), a delightful English boarding-school story, "A Year at Miss Austin's," by Ethel Bridgeman (Century), in a school within an hour of New York. There are two exciting stories about islands, "Gay's Year on Sunset Island," by Marguerite Aspinwall (Putnam), which hunts for treasure, and Hildegard Hawthorne's "Island Farm" (Appleton), which goes on in the West Indies with the picturesque household of her "Makeshift Farm" (Appleton), though the book is complete in itself. "Gipsy Man," by Carroll Rankin (Holt), has a heroine going on nine, but the tale is so robust and spirited that I must at least name it here. "Dear Mother Make-Believe," by Mabel Cleland Widdemer (Harcourt, Brace), begins in an orphan asylum and the girl writes letters, but her adventures are quite different from those in "Daddy Long Legs." "Dorothea's Double," by Margaret Johnson (Century), involves a club of both boys and girls of high school age. I used to like these club stories, and I find that girls continue to do so. "Mary and Marcia, Partners," by Helen Cady Forbes (Macmillan), has a charm it is hard to explain; all there is to it is the effort of two girls to earn a sum of money during a summer in the country, but I kept on straight through. The Beacon Hill Book Shelf (Little, Brown), reprints of tried favorites, should be kept in mind and used as a standby whenever the buying of books for this age is in hand: the latest is a new edition of "An Old-Fashioned Girl" with charming colored plates of the period. Young Maud comes out especially well in them, in her party frock.

There is no reason why grown women should not once in a way read a book like these. I was reminded of this lately when half through a completely grown-up novel, "Shot Towers," by J. T. McIntyre (Stokes) and wondering why a book so full of incident should be so curiously restful. It dawned on me at last that, as its action takes place in the eighties, I was not listening for the telephone. There just were not any such sounds in the domestic air then. A good hearty girl's book may rest a woman in much the same way: it puts into a life, abounding and energetic, in which there are not as yet certain insistent and demanding emotional vibrations.

THREE librarians, at Roebing, N. J., Durham, N. C. and Richmond, Cal., tell L. C. R., Oakland, Cal., that "Fanciful Flower Tales," for which she is looking, (Continued on next page)



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*P. S. The twenty-six *Suggestions to Our Visitors* (pages 71-73) are funnier than the funniest *Americana*.

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Readers Guide

(Continued from preceding page)

is a book of "delightful modern fairy tales of trees and flowers," by Madge A. Biggam (Little, Brown), and one adds that they were written for the author's own kindergarten. The Richmond informant says that anyone in Oakland, the next town to this, can get it at the California School Book Depository. Information through this column may go a long way around, but it arrives. There is another collection by this author, "Merry Animal Tales," in print and published by Little, Brown: these are La Fontaine fables arranged for little children.

O. R. C., Boston, Mass., asks for books in which animals play a leading part, to include in a program of "Animals in Fiction."

CATS have figured in this department in several recent replies and dogs are carefully documented in "A Reader's Guide Book" (Holt), but I am gathering a group of good horse-stories for the new Guide Book; with the echoes of the Rodeo in my ears the only possible work to recommend to this reader is Will James's "Smoky, The Story of a Cow-pony" (Scribner), with pictures jumping straight out of the page. There are all the qualities of a wonderfully good horse-story in this admirable novel, in which there is no love element and in whose last chapter the horse does not die. "The Cowboy and His Interpreters," by Douglas Branch, just published by Appleton, the cowboy as he really is—the author was born and raised in Texas—and the Cowboy of Fiction: The book has many admirable pictures. For the younger reader there is a bookful of stories in "Horses Now and Long Ago," by Lucy Sprague Mitchell (Harcourt, Brace). This has tales about individual horses of past periods, whether hauling immigrant trains or bearing kings in tournaments, and the young reader goes back to the Eohippus before the journey is over.

G. S., Cincinnati, Ohio, says "In response to the query: 'If you could buy but four of this season's books, which would be the best buy, for your personal enjoyment and enrichment?' I would buy Katy Leary's 'A Lifetime With Mark Twain,' 'The Heart of Emerson's Journals,' by Bliss Perry, 'Leaves from a Secret Journal,' by Jane Steger, and 'Adam's Breed,' by Radclyffe Hall."

I AM glad of this letter, not only because it reinforces my own ideas on fiction, but because it gives me a chance to call attention to Jane Steger's illuminating record of spiritual experience, which is published by Little, Brown. Since the year after the war I have been making grateful friends by advising them to read Georges Duhamel's "Possession du Monde," either in the original or in the translation published by the Century Company as "The Heart's Domain."

The New Books Travel

(Continued from page 438)

appeal to all New Yorkers. It has fascinating end-papers and illustrations by Ilonka Karasz. For the out-of-towner it is an unusual sort of guide-book, displayed most attractively, injecting charming historical comment, discussing all the important landmarks and the city by zones. As you turn the large pages, beguiled by the vivid jacket and cover and by the fine bookmaking of the whole work, you will find a wealth of colorful information about the city.

DOWN THE SANTA FÉ TRAIL AND INTO MEXICO, 1846-1847. The Diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin. Edited by STELLA M. DRUMM. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1926. \$4.

A Kentucky belle of family and wealth, the granddaughter of one Governor and sister-in-law of another, would hardly be thought the woman to make a honeymoon journey down the long Santa Fé trail from the Missouri River to New Mexico; especially at the time in 1846 when the outbreak of hostilities with Mexico was momentarily expected. Yet Susan Shelby Magoffin, a blooming, intelligent girl of eighteen, made this arduous trip with eagerness and enjoyment. She was of pioneer stock, and no hardship or danger was too much for her, so long as her husband was by her side. This husband, Samuel Magoffin, also a Kentuckian, had been engaged for more than a dozen years in the overland trade with Mexico, owning in partnership with his brother James, a large caravan of ox teams. The trip which Susan recorded in her diary has a special interest, for the times were critical and the brothers were

drawn into international affairs. James had been sent ahead to New Mexico, with instructions to do all that he could to win the inhabitants of Santa Fé over to the American cause without bloodshed, so that they would receive Gen. Kearney's army peaceably. Samuel was following with the usual caravan of goods, but keeping in close touch with Kearney. The diary begins at Independence, Kansas, on June 11, 1846; it closes near Monterey, Mexico, on September 8, 1847.

This youthful, wealthy, and beautiful bride brought to her experiences a fresh, impressionable mind, and the very naïveté of her journal is often charming. At first her delight in open air travel was unqualified. "O, this is a life I would not exchange for a good deal!" she exclaims. "There is such independence, so much free uncontaminated air, which impregnates that oppression and uneasiness felt in the gossiping circles of a settled home." She enjoyed the prairie flowers, the wolves' howling at night, the wild gooseberries she gathered for a tart. Her pages record with considerable gusto the changing scenes of the march: the busy companies of emigrants outfitting at Council Grove, the Indians naked save for breechcloths, the sublimity of a prairie thunderstorm, the sighting of antelope and other game. "Such soup as we have made of the hump ribs, one of the most choice parts of the buffalo," she notes. "I never eat its equal in the best hotels of New York and Philadelphia. And the sweetest butter and most delicate oil I ever tasted is not surpassed by the marrow taken from the thigh bones." Bent's Fort she found a pleasant resting place, and Santa Fé, where she briefly took up housekeeping, seemed a most romantic spot.

Unfortunately, there were less pleasant experiences, of which she also writes with a good deal of vivid detail. Mosquitos tormented them constantly, she objected to the other "bugs," she was in constant fear for the safety of *mi alma*, her bridegroom; their carriage was smashed, and both of them bruised; at Fort Bent she suffered the miscarriage of a child; and the dirt and uncouthness about her was unpleasant to a gentlewoman. When she reached the Mexican towns and saw little children running about without even a "chimeuse" she was shocked. "I am constrained to keep my veil drawn closely over my face all the time to protect my blushes." Their only society in Santa Fé was the military society of Kearney's troops, and in this she seems to have been an important figure. She and her husband moved southward into Mexico with some of these troops, which in the spring of 1847 were ordered to join Zach-

ary Taylor at Monterey. Historically, the most important parts of her journal are those final pages which describe military scenes. At Saltillo she saw Gen. Wool draw up his troops in expectation of an attack from a much superior force of Mexicans in the vicinity; at Monterey she received a call from Gen. Taylor. She was greatly disappointed in "Old Rough and Ready," for she found him gracious, courteous, quiet, and unassuming—not at all the rough bear as painted by common report.

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TWO VAGABONDS IN SWEDEN AND LAPLAND. By JAN GORDON and CORA J. GORDON. Dodd, Mead. 1926. \$5.

The two vagabonds, Jan and Jo Gordon, are entitled to that designation, for they sedulously avoid the trail of the conventional and respectable tourist to the accepted pilgrimage shrine, as they journey now north, now south in their search for uninvaded regions where one may hope to find unspoiled and natural peasant types, and unexploited and genuine local color. Spain and France have been their former haunts, but this new odyssey chronicles adventures in the far north, rural Sweden and remote Lapland. It is not an expedition to be undertaken lightly but a sense of humor and a ready adaptability, coupled with good-will and determination enable them to accomplish their purpose against a variety of major and minor odds, and to enter rather intimately into the simple life of these unfamiliar regions.

Sans the usual tourist trappings, armed with their paint box, lute and guitar, they enter Stockholm, not with the Grand Hotel or the galleries as their objective but workingmen's lodgings of the most modest type. Tarrying but briefly, but long enough to sniff the flavor of Stockholm's humbler resorts and pastimes, they journey north into Helsingland to a village called Nyby, lured there by a forthcoming fiddler's contest. Installed in a typical Swedish farmhouse, they enter into the spirit of this musical festival with cheerful enthusiasm, and a joyous freshness may be called the keynote of their many adventures and misadventures in quest of Swedish music, and other native manifestations of culture. Neither flies nor mosquitoes, veritable pests in these parts, nor other discomforts dampen their ardor or prevent them from filling their sketch books with gay and spirited record of things seen. There are also vivid colors to further embellish their story.

Lapland almost proves their undoing. The hardships involved in traveling there are only for the most sturdy and adventurous. But obstacles are overcome and our vagabonds achieve a partial triumph at least over inhospitable nature and a population with an inhibition against the camera and sketch book.

Brief Mention

IT is fiction that first confronts us on our shelf this week. Here is "Folly's Gold" by Leroy Scott, (Houghton Mifflin), \$2). Mr. Scott has often written graphically of the underworld. In this, his latest novel, Clifford, a young detective, encounters Bradley, a detective turned black-mailer. Clifford's wife had left him on her wedding day and is now in Bradley's employ. The book is really a series of short stories, episodes in which Clifford is forever trying to trap Bradley and the latter is escaping. In fact, he escapes at the end, doubtless to reappear in a sequel. These escapes are managed with great ingenuity by the author. The story is exciting. Alfred H. Bill's "Highroads of Peril" (Little, Brown \$2) is an historical novel of the Napoleonic period, full of intrigues. The charming and mysterious Irishman, Chevalier Dillon, is an interesting character. The secret agents of the exiled Louis XVIII are at work. Innumerable dangers and adventures pursue Franklin Darlington, the American hero. Mr. Bill is the author of "The Clutch of the Corsican," another rattling adventure story. "Coffee and Conspiracy" by Thomas Grant Springer (Harold Vinal. \$2) transports us to Central America, where tropical plantations and southern republics are full of intrigue and romance. Springer, an old San Francisco newspaper man, has knocked around the world considerably and done all sorts of writing, and he knows the Latins. Then again, it is about time some one wrote a book about the test pilot. Thomas Burtis's "Russ Farrell, Test Pilot" (Doubleday, Page. \$1.50) supplies the need. While the writing is not distinguished, the excitement provided by the test pilot's dangers and exploits, and the advance information about aviation embedded in the yarn, recommend it. "The Judge and Two Lizzies" by Charles T. Fullwood (Dorrance. \$2), is, on the other hand, a humorous tale of an educative cross-country flivver tour. Small-town wit and homely philosophy,—that kind of a book, if you like it. At the opposite pole is Arthur Weigall's intense and rather turgid novel "The Not Impossible She" (New York: Frank-Maurice. \$2). This book is not particularly well written. It is chopped out of life with a meat-axe. It is occasionally absurd. It beats the obvious into a pulp. A thick, solid English novel originally published in Eng-

land in 1925, by a well-known Egyptologist, author and artist, who was once assistant to Flinders Petrie and started writing novels back in 1919. He was special correspondent of the *Daily Mail* at the opening of the tomb of Tutankhamen and is a qualified journalist. A man of many gifts. His book baffles one; because it is, in certain ways, so bad, and yet—it deals with fierce directness with love and marriage, it endeavors to be unsparingly honest, despite its sensationalism. Mr. Weigall's conception of Moira, moreover, is decidedly interesting. She lives on the printed page. She and Clotilde are well contrasted. Sebastian one doesn't much like but he is entirely recognizable as a human being. The book has force and direction. "Renewed from Without" by Charles Edmund Deland (The Torch Press, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. \$2) is, on the other hand, hardly better than its blurb, which runs as follows: "Who loves the ebb and flow of picturesque human waves agitated by contending motives, flashing froth scintillant with satire and drastic sarcasm, and grotesque in curvetings surcharged with the outlandish and obtrusive." After that, what in the world do you expect? Nor should the Reverend B. J. Murdoch's "Souvenir," to be ordered from the author at Douglastown, N. B., Canada, detain us here for long. It is simple and sweet. So, for that matter is "Where the Sod Shanty Stood" by Virgil D. Boyles and O. W. Coursey, Litt. D., published by the Educator Supply Company of Mitchell, S. D.,—but not as good as "Dotty Dimple" or "Work and Win." We come to the end of our fiction with a much better book than any of these last,—yet a mediocre novel judged by other standards, namely "Kingdoms of the World," by Margaretta Tuttle (Putnam, \$2). Of it the publisher says, "The dialogue is scintillant (*objection sustained*) and the brilliant descriptions of diplomatic life in Rome's gay winter season provide an interesting setting for this romance of the Old World and the New." We may fairly leave it at that.

Miscellaneous indeed is the second edition of our self. "An Autobiography of Abraham Lincoln," by Nathaniel Wright Stephenson (Bobbs-Merrill. \$5) contains portions of Lincoln's letters, speeches and conversations. "Foundations of the Republic—Speeches and Addresses of Calvin Coolidge" (Scribners. \$2.50) are our self-martyred President's utterances on education, labor, religion, the Press, government, America in general and other things in particular. "101 New Ways for Women to Make Money," by Ruth Leigh (Simon and Schuster. \$2) will strike a brighter note, for women. Miss Leigh discusses a wonderful number of things that women can turn into cash, from hemstitching made easy to stringing beads and the raising of goldfish. There follow two thin volumes of meditations. William Allen White's "Boys Then and Now" (Macmillan. \$1.25) is a really crisp and pithy discussion of what the old days did for and to youth and what the present does in contrast; and "Meditations of a Profane Man," by "H" (Holt) containing apothegms not nearly so astonishing as the title would seem to indicate, but nudged with wisdom. William Edwin Rudge has printed Judge Charles Forrest Moore's slight book of essays, "Comradeship," specializing in friendliness, in a most attractive way. You can procure a copy for a dollar by writing Rudge at 475 Fifth Avenue. And David Grayson has got out a charming Christmas brochure through Doubleday, Page (\$1.75), "A Day of Pleasant Bread," which would be an excellent small gift to your friends in lieu of an expensive card. Another nice little Rudge book is a printing of five hundred and fifty copies of *Lafcadio Hearn's* "Insects and Greek Poetry," which was a lecture delivered by Hearn before Japanese students in his class in English literature, and here reprinted for the first time in book form.

In "New Plays for Mummies" (Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York City. \$1.50) Glen Hughes has satirized modern plays and at the same time revived the quaint and irreverent manner of the old English mummies' shows. His ten short dramas are in rollicking rhyme. They include an English Comedy, a Russian Tragedy, a Chinese-American Romance, a Rural Melodrama, and so on. They are beautifully printed and bound in art paper with a striking red cover and with numerous block-print illustrations by Richard Bennett. Percival Wilde, whose one-act plays are always notable, has produced in "Kings in Nomania" (Appleton. \$1.25) a Christmas fantasy which possesses great charm and originality and yet makes no special de-

mands upon the producer. The play may be acted by children or by a mixed group of grown-ups and children. *Norrey's Jephson O'Connor's* "The Fairy Bride" (The Lennan Shee) a prologue to Irish drama in three acts, has now gone into French's Standard Library Edition (Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York City). It is a delicate and beautiful drama by a well-known Irish-American poet.

Books in another category are "Syria" by Leonard Stein (New York: Adephi Co. \$1.50), a simple statement of the Syrian situation down to the end of 1925, in which the author has written a book proposing to bring together scattered information and present it impartially (his former work was on Zionism), and "Origins of the Czechoslovak State" by Thomas Capek, Jr., printed for the author of 340 East 198th Street by the Revell Press. This latter is a compact little volume, with a summarized history of the Slavic nations of the old Austrian Empire, followed by a cursory account of the events which led to the setting up of the Czechoslovak State. Important documents are included in an appendix; there is no bibliography.

Then we have "A Popular Encyclopedia of Health" by Dr. Lee K. Frankel and Dr. Donald B. Armstrong (A. & C. Boni. \$3.50), which now makes informa-

tion usually limited to doctors and nurses available for the average reader. Back of the book are years of experience in disease prevention on the part of the authors who belong to the Welfare Division of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. Elizabeth Sage's "A Study of Costume" (Scribners. \$2) treats this subject from the days of the Egyptians to modern times. To each chapter is appended a list of questions pertinent to the matter discussed. The book is a useful compendium. "The English Castles," by E. B. d'Auvergne (Dodd, Mead. \$6), is an importation of large size with illustrations in color, in which the topic is covered from the time of the earliest citadels and pre-Norman castles. Finally "I'm Better To-Day," a compilation of cheerful stuff designed to cheer up invalids, is brought together by race Gaige and published by Reilly and Lee of Chicago. There are blank pages to be filled in on "Flowers Received," "Gifts Received," "Books I Want to Read," etc.

In his "Profile" (Munich: Duncker & Humblot), Victor Naumann has presented a series of lively and illuminating sketches of personalities of Germany and Austria-Hungary prominent during the World War. His essays are informed and discriminating, and based on personal acquaintance with their subjects.

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