

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. Bell'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. Bell 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 Gage* 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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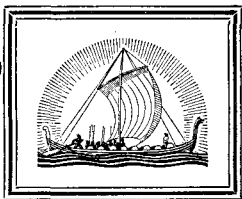
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WE thank W. R. Van Slyke, mining engineer of Eveleth, Minnesota, for sending us a version of "Abdul, the Bulbul Ameer" as it appears in a college Song Book in his library. Parallel to it he has placed the version he learned in 1906. This makes the third complete version of the song we have received since we first mentioned its partial quotation in "Beau Sabreur." It is evidently a highly popular ballad. . . .

During October, according to 103 booksellers in 90 cities, *Ferber, Wren and Galsworthy* were leading the selling fiction in that order, and *Durant, Barton and Dorsey* the General Literature. But *Ferber* and *Durant* had their nearest competitors well outdistanced. . . .

A new Americana series is being started by Doubleday, Page. It will consist of source material such as the unpublished letters of *John Paul Jones, Thomas Jefferson, Lafayette* and *Franklin*, and manuscripts by *Washington Irving*. The first publication in the series, just out, is "*Button Gwinnett*, Signer of the Declaration of Independence," a biography of the famous Georgian by *Charles Francis Jenkins*. Gwinnett's signature recently brought the highest price ever paid for an autograph. Gwinnett was a man of considerable importance in Continental America. . . .

We have received a blank to fill out for tickets for the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters' Labor Dinner. We're sorry we won't be able to go. We wonder whether the Brotherhood has any Brotherhood songs that they sing at their dinners. Some might be, "All Alone in the Lonely Aisles," "The Whisk Broom Blues," "I Hear You Ringing But I Ain't Agointuh Heed," "Uppers and Lowers and All." . . .

Christmas now being nigh it seems appropriate to mention that if *Frank J. Wiltach* had not spent Christmas in Cheyenne many years back we might never have had his book on *Wild Bill Hickok*. For in that indecorous frontier town on Christmas night he met at a local dance, the wife of one of the leading picture-card financiers of the town, *Mrs. S. L. Moyer*. She had formerly been *Minnie Wells* the trapezist and *Wild Bill* and the window Lake had been married at her home. From her Wiltach acquired much information about *Wild Bill*. . . .

The International Book Review, after running four years, demised with its November number. We are sorry. We welcome all distractions from work and it was one of the distractions. . . .

We are in receipt of *Fire!!* devoted to the younger negro artists, a quarterly published at 314 West 138th Street, the premier issue being edited by *Wallace Thurman* in association with *Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Bennett, Richard Bruce, Cora Neale Hurston, Aaron Douglas* and *John Davis*. The drawings by *Richard Bruce* and *Aaron Douglas* are good, and *Bruce* starts perpetrating a spasmodic effort called "Smoke, Lilies and Jade" which seems to be an attempt at a negro "Ulysses." And *Wallace Thurman* defends *Van Vechten* against negro protests against his "Nigger Heaven." . . .

We were shocked to hear of *George Sterling's* death. He wrote some really fine poetry. Certain of his sonnets are masterly. His spirit was one of enthusiasm and generosity toward his confrères. Recently he hailed the rising of *Robinson Jeffers*, wrote a book on the man's work. There was never an atom of the mean or grudging in *Sterling*. He was greatly gifted and a loyal friend. Some of his work will live. . . .

On the day prior to *Sterling's* death *Allen Upward* died in England, also by his own hand. Some of his poetry anticipated the Imagist movement. He fought as a volunteer in the war between Greece and Turkey in 1897 and was Headmaster of *Inverness College* in 1916. . . .

And yet a third death of moment to the literary world was that of *Clement K. Shorter* the English editor, who died on November 19th at his home in London, aged sixty-nine. His illness last August had forced him to give up editing the *Sphere*, which he had founded in 1900. . . .

Returning to *Sterling*, on September fourth *The Saturday Review of Literature* published his sonnet "Silence," one of the most impressive of his later poems, and his sonnet "The Final Faith" appeared in *The Commonwealth* of December first. We quote its sestet here in memory of this distinguished poet:

But when the humiliation of the flesh
Is ours, like truant children going home
We turn to thee, the beautiful and best,
Whose dew-remembered flowers are ever fresh—
Whose winds are from the snows and ocean-foam—

Who hast the starlight on thy marble breast.

In Dublin *William Butler Yeats*, the sixth volume of whose collected works is just appearing in this country, is a distinguished printer of books as well as a poet. His *Cuala Press* holds high rank. It is a branch of the *Cuala Industries* run by the *Yeats* family. One of W. B.'s sisters has charge of the embroidery department of the industries, one manages the hand-press whose publications the poet himself edits. His brother, *Jack Butler Yeats*, of the *Royal Hibernian Academy*, designs the hand-colored prints which are a by-product of the firm. . . .

The Gypsy, the Cincinnati All-Poetry Magazine, prints in its Winter Issue of December some lines from an old-fashioned autograph album of 1836 by *Elizabeth Barrett Browning*. The verses are used by courtesy of Mr. W. T. H. Howe, as they are from his collection of rare MSS, and folios. . . .

At the age of seven, *Zona Gale*, author of fourteen works of fiction, the latest of which is "Preface to a Life," began writing with the following:

THE THREE TRAVELERS

The sun was sinking behind the western hills when three travellers appeared, walking very fast for it was getting dark, and they were all alone. One was tall with long whiskers and grey hair. One was short with a brown mustache. The other was middle sized with a bare face. Suddenly down the path came a beautiful maiden. The short man loved her right away and so did the tall man. The short man asked her: "What is your name?" She replied: "I am lost." The short man offered to show her the way to town but when they reached there the tall man stepped up and said: "Will you marry me?" And the maiden answered: "N—yes, I will too." And so they were married and lived happily ever afterward.

Scribners is publishing the largest, richest and most individual anthology of English and American literature ever issued (they say). This is the *Copeland Reader*. Some years ago *Professor Copeland* of Harvard began to choose selections he had read aloud publicly or in his courses, or to friends gathered in *Hollis 15*. He thus formed a collection of prose and verse of some 1,700 large pages. For Harvard men especially attached to "Copey" a special edition has been made of 250 copies, in two volumes, with photogravure frontispieces, one a portrait and the other a view of *Copeland's* study in *Hollis Hall*. The price of this special edition is eighteen dollars. . . .

"The Dark Dawn," by *Martha Ostenso*, is reported to be making even better record than her first novel, "Wild Geese." It is at present in its third large printing. Miss Ostenso has just restored an old house on the top of the *Palisades* in New Jersey where she can look from *Tarrytown* to the Battery, provided, of course, there isn't too much smoke, etc., in the atmosphere. . . .

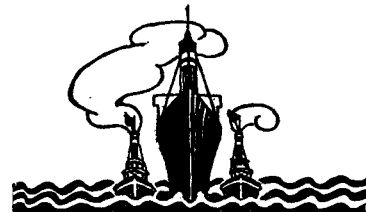
A précis of the feats of *Louis M. Elshemus, M.A.*, has come to hand. It advertises "The Art Reformer," for sale at art and book stores or at *Studio, 132 East 23d., Street, Room 1*. *Louis Michel Elshemus* is assuredly a man of vast talents. He is thus partially described in the circular before us. "At 25 years of age he was a master of painting, poetry, prose, and of music. Since 1889 he pursued the three fine art assiduously—achieving success in each. His art output is marvellous: master-works in every form and subject in literature, over 200 vols.; art works: 3,000 paintings (oils and water colors); pencil drawings, designs, etc., over 2,000; in music, over 100 piano pieces, and 1,000 unwritten musical works." Mr. Elshemus is also an inventor of a gold leaf gild, two frame attachments, a magical ink that renews itself, and he discovered wireless telegraphy in 1886. "He is the most rapid master painter of all time, eclipsing *Van Dyck* of reputed fame." He is a globe-trotter, a mesmerist, and has written sonnets at the rate of ten a day; one in five minutes; fifty in twelve hours. "Having written over 1,500 sonnets, of which 1,000 are perfect, his rapidity in creating them is wonderful." He also wrote a five-act drama in 30 hours. In painting he has discovered ten new techniques, unknown to any artist living. He has painted a perfect nude in twenty minutes. . . .

Mr. Elshemus is really quite talented. But we are exhausted by all that for this week. Guess we'll have to stagger off home!

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